

IMAGINARY SPEECHES

Jack Collings
Squire


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IMAGINARY SPEECHES

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AND OTHER
PARODIES IN
PROSE AND
VERSE

BY

JACK COLLINGS
SQUIRE



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PREFATORY NOTE

IN order to prevent honest folk from unnecessarily puzzling their brains, I may say that in the parodies of modern prose and verse not individuals but general current tendencies are aimed at. Only in the case of one of the prose articles have I attempted to parody the method of a particular writer.

JACK C. SQUIRE.



IMAGINARY SPEECHES

I

BY LORD ROSEBERY

STYLE : THE JUDICIOUS-CONSISTENT

The next Liberal Government has sent to the Lords a Finance Bill, the only "feature" of which is the repeal of the licence duty on dogs.

I HAVE no party ties, my lords. I am but an ordinary private, and I hope not altogether useless—(cheers)—member of your lordships' House. I speak with no glamour of ministerial authority about me. I have long dwelt in isolation, I will not say splendid but certainly complete—(laughter)—and I am not so vain or so shallow as to think that any halting sentences of mine will have the merest

modicum of influence upon your lordships. Yet I cannot but deem it my duty to say my feeble word—the tremulous mouthing it may seem, maybe, of an old superannuated, even doting, actor who has long doffed the buskin—against this measure, a measure which from the bottom of my heart I believe to be fraught with the gravest consequences to the welfare of this Empire and these ancient realms. (Loud cheers.) What is this Bill? It is, as far as my poor intellect can determine, an enabling Bill to permit, nay to compel—(loud cheers)—this country to take the first downward step towards Avernus. Nothing more, nothing less. “But,” observe its suave and genial progenitors—(laughter)—“nothing is further from our thoughts.” (Laughter.) “We haven’t the slightest wish to ruin the country.” My lords, their intentions are the very

last things that matter. Your deeds may be crimson though your desires be whiter than snow. (Laughter and cheers.) What, I may ask, have we to do with the intentions of the Government? They may be excellent. I don't deny it. (Laughter.) They may be immaculate. They may be illuminate with a virgin whiteness, untainted with the blemishes of greed or jealousy, or hate, or the lust for strife. They may be all that. But with all the meagre solemnity at my command I ask you to weigh them, to consider whither they lead.

This, it is said, is a money Bill. It is, so far as it is new, a Bill to relieve the owners of dogs of the necessity of paying the trifling tax which has been hitherto imposed. The money can be spared, and an auspicious opportunity offers for relieving those who possess

canine quadrupeds of a tax which, though small, like the mosquito, is unquestionably irritating. The Bill is a pure money Bill, and your lordships have to sit with folded hands while it passes, impotent to reject it. It is an inconsiderable Bill, and there is slight need to trouble about it. A very simple matter! But is it, my lords, is it? I say with intense sincerity that it is far, far more than that. It is not primarily a Finance Bill, and I would that I could honestly describe it as an inconsiderable Bill. I maintain, my lords, that it is not a Bill for the diminution of taxes; it is a Bill for the multiplication of dogs. (Loud cheers.) There lies the rotten core of this fruit with the blushfully innocent exterior. Every competent and experienced statesman knows that the dog-licence duty is not a tax at all. No one, as far as my poor observation goes—

not even the present Chancellor of the Exchequer—holds the matured opinion that a man is a fit subject for penalisation merely because he is so unfortunate as to find pleasure in having his footsteps dogged—(laughter)—by the humble hound, or his fireside decorated—(laughter)—by the comfortable cur. Such cravings have not in the past—I know not what may happen in the future—been characterised as testifications to hopeless and abysmal depravity—(laughter)—the desire to keep a dog has not even been regarded as a possibly pardonable peccadillo. Rather, my lords, has this nameless longing for the society of dumb and faithful beasts been regarded as something worthy in a man, something to be reverently cherished, something reminiscent of that infinitude from which trailing clouds of glory do we come. Many a

man has been better for the companionship of a dog. (Cheers.) Many a sombre and tenebrous deed has been killed before it was born by the naïve and half-divine appeal in the eyes of some devoted mastiff or bloodhound. (Cheers.) I have not a word to say against the dog. I have not a word to say against the dog keeper. In my own small way I have kept dogs myself. (Laughter and prolonged cheers.) But, my lords, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. The great ministers of the past knew that only by keeping the canine population within rigid limits would that population remain a blessing and not a curse. Enough dogs are as good as a feast. If we have more than enough I gravely fear we shall be as good as a feast for them. (Laughter and cheers.) Enough dogs eat our rats. More would

eat us. Once remove this tax and the sole restriction upon the wholesale breeding of dogs, the sole inducement to the wholesale submersion of young dogs—(laughter)—will have been swept away. I have no desire to exaggerate, my lords. Obscure though I may be, my only thought is to give the plain opinion of a plain man who wishes in his humble manner to do his countrymen service. But the terms of this Bill bring inevitably before my eyes the vision of an England covered with litters next year, covered with packs of grown and voracious hounds next year. We cannot feed them. The thin veneer of civilisation will slip from them, and they will become again as the wild wolves of the woods. I see the infinite thousands of dogs sweeping the counties from South to North. London will be devastated. The horror will rush

over our great midland metropolis, over the thriving cotton looms of Lancashire, over the immense and flourishing iron districts of the North, a vast and portentous pestilence, growing daily blacker and more foul. The land will be oppressed as by the shadow of death itself; no moving thing will be seen save lean and insatiate shapes, which will pad along with fiery eyes and lolling tongues, exhausted with the absorption of human blood. Europe is arming. England is beset by enemies, grim, intent, armipotent. The day will come. They will spring. And when they come they will find an England, lonely, desolate, depopulated. England like Jezebel will have been devoured by the dogs.

My lords, I say nothing of the enormous constitutional importance of this Bill. (Loud cheers.) The dog-licence duty

has from time immemorial been an integral part of our constitution. I need not remind you of the immortal words used by the younger Pitt on the introduction of the Merchandise Bill of 1802 : "Our Constitution is a delicate and complex fabric. Tamper with one insignificant thread or joist of it and you bring the whole to the ground in ruin, irretrievable, irreparable." (Loud cheers.) I can only add that I most bitterly regret that some of your lordships should have seen fit to advocate the rejection of this Bill, and that I have no option but to back my opinion by emphatically abstaining from voting. (Dead silence.)

II

BY THE RIGHT HON. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

1915; he, as Premier, having introduced a Women's Suffrage Bill. The reports are taken from The Times.

I. INSIDE THE HOUSE. STYLE :—THE SUCKING DOVE

MR LLOYD GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): Well, now, Mr Speaker, I really didn't think it of the right honourable gentleman (Mr Balfour). I thought this was a matter upon which we had all agreed years and years ago. When I introduced this Bill I thought we should during this debate have a sort of little Hague Conference. Here, said I to myself, are the Liberals; they all want to give votes to

women. Here are the Socialists ; they've been like a regiment of human megaphones demanding votes for women. And here are the right honourable gentleman and his friends who, at any rate during the general election—(laughter)—almost worried themselves into a rapid decline in their anxiety to prove their devotion to the cause of women's suffrage. (Opposition dissent.) Well, perhaps, they weren't quite as fanatical as dervishes about it, but seriously, Mr Speaker, nine out of ten of the right honourable gentleman's supporters, at least nine out of ten, I should say, said, either in their election addresses, or in platform speeches, or in replies to deputations, that they were in favour of the principle of this reform. So, of course, I thought in my childish ignorance that they meant to vote for it.

(Ministerial cheers and laughter.) I didn't know the way their ingenious minds worked. (Ministerial cheers and laughter.) I thought that my Bill would go down like—what shall I say?—like butter down a cat's throat. And now I find the right honourable gentleman turning and rending my unfortunate little non-controversial measure with the savage ferocity of a rattlesnake with a red-hot poker on its tail. (Loud laughter, in which Mr Balfour heartily joined.)

Well, really, I don't know what to make of it. I didn't hear any arguments from the right honourable gentleman. (Derisive Opposition laughter and cries of "Oh! Oh!") No, seriously, I didn't recognise any genuine arguments. I know the right honourable gentleman has as kind a heart as any man in the House. (General cheers.) He wouldn't, if I may

say so, hurt a hair on the head of a gnat. (Laughter.) I've promised to consider every hard case, every objection on points of detail that members on either side of the House may bring forward. If you've any fault to find with any clause or any sub-section in this Bill, you've only to bring it before me, and I promise faithfully that I will give it my most earnest consideration. I'll do that. I'll meet you half way. I'll meet you more than half way. I'll run to meet you with open arms. (Laughter.) So, come, come; just let's see if we can't agree about this business. I don't believe the right honourable gentleman is mean. I don't believe he likes to be thought mean. I don't think he'd like people in the country to say that he and his friends were mean. In many and many a humble cottage to-night, where the rain is pouring through

holes in the thatch, where the only light comes from a candle stuck in a broken bottle, where there isn't a crust left in the cupboard, and there isn't even a little bit of coal in the grate, poor old women are sitting waiting for what this House can give them without harming anybody the least little bit in the world. Some of you have had sisters and mothers. (Ministerial cheers.) Surely you aren't going to let it be said that the Opposition was so niggardly, so callous, so hard-hearted as to refuse a poor miserable old vote to a poor old woman, to block up the little ray of sunshine which would light up with its flickering gleam——

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham):
Garn! Stow that slime!

THE SPEAKER: I must remind the noble earl that the language of everyday life is not permissible within the walls of this House.

EARL WINTERTON: Of course, Mr Speaker, I submit to your ruling and withdraw.

II. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. STYLE :—THE
FORTITER IN MODO

These Tories! Look at 'em! What a mingy, stingy lot they are. (Loud cheers.) What a greedy, miserable crew. (Loud cheers.) The more you give 'em, the more they want. These Lansdownes and Rothschilds, and dukes, and lord-knows-whats, why, they've got stomachs like the Bottomless Pit. (Laughter.) You can't fill 'em. Here's this Woman's Suffrage Bill, the People's Bill. (Loud cheers.) I came to 'em, and offered 'em concessions. I said to 'em, "I'll give you anything within reason; ask me anything within reason, and you shall have it."

(Loud cheers.) I offered 'em concessions by the bushel—hogsheads, perhaps, are more in their line. (Laughter.) I raised the age limit for 'em ; I told 'em the Tory agents could stand outside the polling booths as the women came in and examine their teeth to see there was no cheating about age. (Loud laughter.) I increased the property limit. (Cheers and dissent.) I told 'em I'd exempt mothers-in-law if they liked. (Roars of laughter.) What did they do? They took up my concessions in their bloated, blue-blooded fingers, and flung 'em back in my face with a curse. (Cries of exasperation.) Faugh! It makes one almost bilious to think of it! These waddling old Tory members, these dilapidated, doddering, drivelling old dukes—(laughter)—they're plural voters, every man of 'em. They've got two votes apiece. (Shame!) They've

got four votes apiece. (Shame! and hisses.) Some of 'em have got six, eight, twenty, a hundred votes apiece. (Hisses.) Why, you'll hardly believe me, but there's one old monkey-faced idiot, who gets all his income from liquor, and spends it on the same, who has no less than six hundred and seventy votes. (Loud hisses.) Think of it! One for every constituency in the country. You're all retail voters. These superior, fine gentlemen are wholesale voters. They're worth their weight in votes. They've got more votes than they can carry. They take 'em about in carts. (Loud laughter.) They've got bundles of 'em, faggots of 'em, stacks of 'em. (A voice: "Give it to 'em, sir!" and cheers.) Isn't it mean? Aren't they a lot of skinflints? Why, they'd sneak a marrow bone from a dog, or a penny from a blind man's tin.

I ask 'em not to give up any of their innumerable votes — oh dear, no — but just to grant one poor little vote to every poor old woman in the country ; just one poor old vote to one poor old woman ; just a vote for a poor old woman who is sitting desolate, childless, hungry, cold, beside her empty fireside. [Here the right honourable gentleman resumed his seat, displaying marked emotion.]

III

BY THE RIGHT HON.
F. E. SMITH, K.C., M.P.

STYLE: THE DISCURSIVO-EPIGRAMMATICO-
POLITE

Extract from The Maily Pelegrost, 10th June 1913.
The new Liberal Government has introduced a Local
Veto Bill.

ON Saturday Mr F. E. Smith opened the new premises of the Unionist and Tariff Reform Club at Doodle-cum-Flap. Subsequently Mr Smith addressed a mass meeting in the Balfour Hall. Lord Bere was in the chair, and amongst those on the platform were many ladies. Mr Smith, who on rising received an ovation, said that the Radicals, in their own inimitable way—(laughter)—had seized the very first

opportunity that had offered to diddle and swindle the electors who, in a misguided frenzy, had sent them back to the premises which they, and the numerous minute but distinctly unpleasant occupants of their hats—(loud laughter)—had infested for six years. (Shame!) They had produced a Local Veto Bill, a Bill which provided that in every town and village throughout the whole length and breadth of the country where the Clifford canters and the Horne humbugs and the Whittaker water-spewers—(laughter)—had a transient majority, the decent working man would not be able to get even the very occasional thimbleful of beer that, with a Cobdenite Government doing its utmost to lower his wages, was all he could afford. He was not going to give them an analysis of the details of this precious piece of legislation. Radical Bills were like

muck-heaps: they were noisome enough as wholes, but once one began picking them to pieces they were nauseating to the point of excruciation. (Laughter and applause.) What he wanted to consider was the origin, the genesis, of this elegant proposal. Who was its putative parent they all knew; but the amiable nonentity who introduced the Bill—he would mention no names—(laughter)—was no more the actual progenitor of this deformed and perverted freak than he (the speaker) was. The truth was that the monster, like the ordinary child in the Socialist State, had a multiplicity of fathers. (Loud laughter and cheers.) There were the gentlemen who held that the liquid aliment of the entire population should be cocoa, towards which beverage they had perhaps a natural bias, because they manufactured it themselves. (Laughter.) There were the

gentlemen who had purchased comfort, and hoped to purchase peerages, out of the profits made from the sale of those repellent effervescences — (laughter) — which amongst Radicals went, he believed, under the names of lemonade—(laughter) —and ginger-ale. (Much laughter.) There were the fish-eyed Pharisees who believed that a discriminating deity had sent them into the world to purge it of its sins. Pure, sweet souls! Good men! They wanted to make England sober; but they did not know that they could never make men sober by Act of Parliament. (Loud cheers.) Even if they could, he personally would rather see England in a state of unintermittent inebriety—(laughter)—than wearing the dyspeptic lily of a blameless Nonconformity. These were the fathers of the Bill; these and one lot more. Last, but not least reptilian—(laughter)

—there were the professional agitators at present in control of the Radical caucus. Did they drink cocoa? Did they drink lemonade? Were they concerned about leading the erring British soul into the straight and narrow path? They certainly mouthed the mealiest platitudes. Their fluency as panegyrists of virtue, their self-abnegatory repudiation of interested motives were worthy of St Titus Oates and the Very Reverend Uriah Heep. (Laughter.) But when one had smelt the breath of some of them after dinner—(loud laughter)—across the floor of the House—(roars of laughter)—one was somewhat inclined to discount their unctuous utterances.

What was the composition of this Cabinet—this Radical Cabinet which had foisted itself on a patient nation? If he had the elegance of diction and facility

of generalisation of some of its members, he would say that it was composed half of fools on the bombast and half of rogues on the make. (Laughter and cheers.) Its head was that prize puppet, Mr Asquith, whose most distinctive characteristic was the complacency with which he permitted himself to be led by his rather bulbous nose. (Laughter.) Then they had that genial spirit, Mr Alexander Ure, who united the acquisitiveness peculiar to his countrymen with a mendacity entirely peculiar to himself. They had that bloated gasbag, Lord Haldane, who had apparently been sent to the War Office because it was felt that the British Army had hitherto been inadequately equipped with steerable balloons. (Laughter.) They had Mr Burns, of whom about the best that could be said was that he had a pronounced distaste for some of his

colleagues. They had Mr Lloyd George, a person of plebeian extraction—(loud cheers and laughter)—who seemed to labour under the quite erroneous impression that a juvenile talent for eluding the constabulary whilst poaching rabbits qualified him to legislate for his betters, and who, by the beastly vulgarity of his invective, had made the tone of our public life approximate to that of the circles in which he had been brought up. There was a jostling mob of undistinguished lawyers, who had been ousted by superior men from practice at the Bar ; and there was a contemptible handful of equally undistinguished peers, who, knowing that they would have no chance of getting jobs from the Unionist party, had degraded themselves to the level of rascally Welsh solicitors in order to obtain jobs from the other. And there

was Mr Winston Churchill, the arch-adventurer, whose carefully prepared impromptus and oil-saturated epigrams had made him a little tin god with the deluded fetish worshippers who squatted at the feet of the Radical leaders. But then Mr Churchill was a rat. (Loud cheers.)

The Radical party was a hollow sham. The country was finding it out. The Radicals abused the rich, when every sensible man knew that every single Radical M.P. would joyfully wade through six miles of sewage to shake hands with a lord. At all events, they would stink no more at the end of it than they did when they went in. Radicals said Tories drank. Well, Tories said Radicals stank. (Loud laughter.) The country did not want local veto, and it did not want the Government. What it wanted was work, and only the Unionist party could give

it work. They would be returned to power under their great leader, Mr Balfour, to formulate and enforce a scheme of Tariff Reform—(prolonged cheers)—which would increase employment, multiply our revenues, and bind with indissoluble links the Empire of which they were all so proud. (Loud and continued cheering.)

IV

BY THE RIGHT HON. ALEX-
ANDER URE, K.C.

STYLE : THE CANDID

As seen through Unionist spectacles.

ON Saturday the Lord Advocate re-deemed a promise of long standing by paying a visit to Pongleborough. The right honourable gentleman, who arrived overnight, and slept at the Crown Hotel, lunched with the Mayor (Mr John King, J.P., C.C.) and Mayoress, and subsequently paid a visit to the De Wryggle Almshouses, the oldest charity in the town. The old people, men and women, who live in the almshouses, were already assembled in the little Elizabethan hall attached to the quaint old buildings, and when Mr Ure stepped upon the platform

to address them they displayed numerous perceptible signs of animation. Mr Ure, who looked very well after his recent holiday, said that he wished he could have given old people in the evening of their days somewhat warmer comfort than he found himself able to give. But he did feel that the public man's first duty on every occasion was not to blink the truth. (Cheers.) He was afraid, although he did not like to say it, that there was still some chance that the Unionists would return to power at the latest within the next two or three years. Did they quite realise what that would mean? Well, it would mean first and foremost that Tariff Reform would be introduced. There seemed to be some doubt about as to what Tariff Reform really meant, but he could tell them. Mr Balfour was vague enough in public, but

in private he was frank to the point of indiscretion, and the last time he (Mr Ure) had dined with Mr Balfour that eminent statesman had told him that he was irrevocably resolved to put a tax of twenty shillings per quarter upon wheat. He need not tell them what the result of that would be. It would mean that the loaf which now cost them a penny—(A Voice: "Fivepence halfpenny, mister")—yes, fivepence halfpenny — would cost them one shilling and sixpence farthing. Where would their old age pensions be then? Amidst sobs and piteous moans—the tears were running in rivers down the face of one old lady who was sitting next *The Daily Post* representative—Mr Ure went on to say that the weekly pension that a kind and thoughtful Liberal Government had bestowed upon each old man—yes, and each old woman—in that

room would purchase three loaves a week under Tariff Reform, leaving fivepence farthing a week for tobacco, drink, meat, firing, light, clothes, and all the other little luxuries which added sunlight to the life of old folk. That would be bad enough; but he had worse to tell them. He had received that morning a letter from Lord Lansdowne. It was marked "Private and confidential," but he felt that it was so important that it was his higher duty to reveal the contents. He would read it to them:

"LANSDOWNE HOUSE, BERKELEY SQUARE,
"TOOTING, E.C.

"MY DEAR URE,—Between you and me, Balfour and me have decided that if we win the next election we shall have to lay down 54 Dreadnoughts. That means, of course, that we shall have to stop the old age pensions. But that will have to be

between you and me just now. So don't mention it.—Yours ever,

“ LANSDOWNE.”

“Now,” went on Mr Ure, “that can only mean one thing. (Hear, hear.) It means that if you help to send the Tories back to power your old age pensions are gone beyond recovery. No more silver five shillings from the post office, no more loaves, no more coals, no more nice warm blankets, you will all of you have to turn out — (sensation) — of your almshouses. They are going to be turned into barracks for the ‘Dreadnoughts,’ and you will all of you have to go to the workhouse—if it is not shut up—or sell matches in the street if these villainous conspirators don't introduce a Bill, as I have good reason for believing they will do, to forbid that. That is bad enough. Yes,

my friends, that is bad enough. But there is one last thing that it is, yes it is, my duty to mention, a thing so horrible that I can scarcely bring my tongue to utter it. Ladies and gentlemen, you have not yet heard of it. It has not yet got into the papers. But you have heard of Colonial Preference?" ("Yes.") "It all sounds very well, but I can tell you beyond fear of contradiction that the Colonies have agreed to give us preference upon the corn we send them only upon one condition. That condition is, that we should allow them to send us the surplus population from their great teeming cities. And how can we find room for them? Only in one way; only by killing off our old people. (Loud cries of horror.) At this moment Mr Balfour has upon his mantelpiece the complete Bill—the Existence Length of (Abbreviation)

Bill—which embodies the demands made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the other Australian sovereigns. You are to be given three months in which you are to make your wills and kiss your grandchildren good-bye. Then, in batches of ten, you are to be taken to the municipal slaughter-house and poleaxed. This is what is in front of you. I shall do all I can to prevent it. If you vote for my friend Mr Jones I will prevent it. I do all for your sakes. I have no personal interest in it. I have no old relations. I never had a grandmother. I never had a mother.”

When the right honourable gentleman left the room the benches were strewn with the unconscious forms of the aged pensioners. One old man alone was on his feet blindly shaking his fist at heaven and crying: “Them —— Tories, God rot 'em!”

V

BY THE RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR

STYLE : THE ENLIGHTENING

It is 1919, and the Unionist Government in power has introduced a Budget providing for the 50 per cent. taxation of land values. Much to Mr Balfour's surprise the Liberals have impugned his attitude, and he rises a little flushed or—as the Liberal Parliamentary sketch-writers would say—"purple with rage."

MR SPEAKER, I really find myself totally unable to comprehend the most extraordinary objections which have been lodged against myself and my friends by honourable gentlemen opposite. One might have imagined that an Opposition which was confronted with a measure embodying principles which they themselves had, in however crude and incomplete a

manner, first formulated and developed in legislative form, a measure to which by what appears to be common consent they do not at this moment assign to the category of Bills the substance of which encounters criticism from them on fundamental grounds, but into that other category of Bills which are based upon tenets which find general acceptance not merely upon one side, but upon both sides of the House, one would have supposed that an Opposition confronted with such a measure, moreover, providing for the financial necessities of the year, might well have found it both dignified and convenient to confine their attention, or, at all events, their hostile attention, to points of detail in the measure which, in their judgment, call for proper comment, and might have refrained from indulging in those more general observations to which the House is

accustomed when matters are under discussion regarding which there is a wide and deep cleavage of opinion. That is what one would have supposed. That is the gross error—(Ministerial cheers)—into which one would have fallen. Apparently our view of what is right and proper procedure is not shared by gentlemen opposite. Unable, apparently, to vent their political spleen upon our present, they have vented it upon our past. (Loud Ministerial cheers and Opposition laughter.)

If I be correct, and I think I am correct—(Ministerial cheers)—the gravamen of the accusation against us is that we opposed the land taxes of 1909, and that we have introduced the land taxes of 1919. (MR LLOYD GEORGE: "Hear, hear.") I understand the right honourable gentleman to give his assent to that proposition. He and his colleagues have done me the

honour of quoting some hoary and venerable observations—(laughter)—of mine that I confess I had myself forgotten, from speeches I made during the debates upon the right honourable gentleman's first and—if I may venture to make such distinctions between things which to all save the most fastidiously discriminating of eyes must seem equally bad (prolonged Ministerial cheers)—his most mischievous Budget. I acknowledge I was rejoiced to hear these old acquaintances again. If I may say so without traversing the frontiers of a due modesty, I never until now fully realised how great a degree of justice and force there was in the contentions I then advanced. (Cheers and laughter.) But for the life of me I cannot understand why these passages should have been exhumed from the nether profundities of Hansard, least of all by

honourable gentlemen opposite. What do they prove? They prove that I and my friends behind me offered a very solid and a very strenuous resistance to proposals that we thought then and think now to have been preposterous proposals, that we opposed the land taxes of ten years ago. Well, what of that? What if we did oppose them? I don't deny that I did. (Ironical Opposition laughter.) I don't think that any of my friends will deny that they did. If anybody does deny that we did I shall be prepared most emphatically to contradict him. But even allowing—which I am far from allowing, I shall come to that presently—that we have been superficially inconsistent, are honourable gentlemen opposite so ignorant of the most elementary forms of our constitutional practice, of that Parliamentary custom which in the opinion of many of us

has a higher sanction even than the law of the land, as to think that the speeches of an Opposition ten years ago either are, or should be, or should be expected to be, valid criteria of the actions of a Government to-day, or to maintain that a party which has once dissented from the policy underlying a Bill ought, when in power, steadfastly and for all eternity to refrain from adapting itself to changed conditions when that Bill has become an Act? Have honourable and right honourable gentlemen opposite, political Miltons and Savonarolas—(laughter)—ever held that verbal consistency should be the primary objective of men of affairs? I do not think, sir, that the most rabid doctrinaire, I do not think that even the right honourable gentleman who represents Dundee—(loud laughter)—would support that position in his calmer moments.

But, quite apart from this matter of literal consistency, upon which such great and, as I think, such undue stress has been laid, there is a question of fact. If honourable gentlemen had really honoured my old speeches as wholes with the careful scrutiny they have bestowed upon isolated and detached sentences from them—(cheers)—they would have discovered that we have not been even inconsistent. What did we attack? We did not attack taxes. (Cheers.) We did not attack land taxes. (Cheers and ironical cheers.) What we attacked and all that we attacked was the land taxes of 1909. In our speeches we specifically made this clear. We distinctly and in terms repudiated any objection to the principle that the State should, if its financial needs should be justifiably pressing, absorb a fair portion of unearned increment in land. In my

speech upon the Second Reading of the 1909 Budget I plainly characterised that doctrine as a legitimate doctrine. (Ministerial cheers.) I repeated my statement in slightly different words at Manchester, and many of my friends pursued a similar course. Not merely that, but, if I rightly remember, we actually pressed for the insertion of the specific word, "unearned," before "increment" in the text of the Finance Bill, and our request was—incredible though it may seem—flatly refused by the Government of the day on the ostensible ground that if it were granted legal complications would follow. Did that action on our part connote any deep-rooted reluctance to secure for the community wealth the community had created? (Cheers.) Was there anything selfish and sinister in that? (Loud cheers.) Still, we fought the taxes. Agreed; but

why? We fought them for the very simple and sufficient reason that they were not what their authors professed them to be. (Cheers.) We objected to an impost so small—two per cent., or five or ten per cent., I forget the exact figure—that it produced a gross revenue absolutely insignificant. We objected, moreover, to a tax which carried with it a scheme of valuation which entailed upon the State an expenditure infinitely greater than the revenue which was to accrue to the State. (Cheers.) Our objections were not academic; they were business objections. They were founded not upon a creed of economics, but upon a creed of economy. (Cheers.) Can anyone say that there is even the remotest affinity, save the bare terminological one, between the tax we are proposing now and the tax they proposed then? Our tax is a tax of fifty per cent.

It will bring in twenty millions this year. (Cheers.) The additional cost of valuation will be nothing. (Cheers.) The great increase which we have fortunately been able to promote in the number of owners of land will make it a far less invidious and undemocratic tax than was that of 1909. As far as I can deduce, sir, what the argument of the Opposition comes to is this: "You refused to waste money ten years ago; therefore you have no moral right to raise money now." (Loud and continued Ministerial cheers, during which the right honourable gentleman resumed his seat.)

VI

BY THE RIGHT HON.
JOHN BURNS, M.P.

The Report is taken from a certain Sunday journal.

YESTERDAY the vigorous President of the Local Government Board paid a surprise visit to the Hanwell Hatch Asylum, Surrey. Mr Burns had been expected at eleven, but failed to appear at that early hour. It afterwards transpired that the train which he intended to catch had left Clapham Junction a minute early, and that Mr Burns, who had spent the morning at Whitehall, had been compelled to wait for the nine-thirty down express, which did not stop at Clapham, but which the brisk and breezy President of the Local Government Board caught by the to him simple

expedient of leaping on to the footboard of the engine as it flashed between the platforms at something under forty miles per hour. It was, therefore, close upon twelve before the strenuous minister was seen blithely striding over the gently rising arable ground amidst which the asylum is prettily ensconced, and the last strokes of midday were booming out as he passed between the outer portals and up the avenue, along each side of which the inmates, in their neat blue overalls, were lined up. As Mr Burns threaded his way between the long files there were loud plaudits, and the genial President of the Local Government Board had a bluff shake of the head and a merry wink for each of the poor sufferers, who were obviously proud of the honour of welcoming a Cabinet Minister whose name is a household word.

Having inspected the dormitories and the spacious deal dining-hall, with its portrait of the first governor (attributed to Giotto), the inmates were assembled in the latter, where Mr Burns mounted the rostrum to address them, and began forthwith to speedily put them at their ease. Mr Burns said that he was glad to see so many merry and familiar faces—(cheers)—around him. It almost reminded him of the House of Commons, he felt so at home. (Loud cheers.) Some were old, some were young, some were men, some were women, some even mere children ; but all, he thought, looked contented and well-fed and happy, and he considered they ought to think themselves blessed lucky—(laughter)—to be looked after by such worthy and kind-hearted people as the matrons, the nurses, the warders, the gatekeepers, and his good friend the

Governor, Mr Hopkinson, whom he was glad to see standing behind him. Asylums, continued the right honourable gentleman, were, as the poet said, a boon and a blessing to men. In the old days, before an era of bright, benevolent, beneficent legislation came upon that dear old country of theirs, they might have looked up and down the length and breadth of the land "from Hackney Downs to Hammersmith," as the saying was, without finding a single clean, sanitary, healthy asylum; nothing except a few hundred miserable, dismal doss-houses for the dotty—(laughter)—run by doctors on the make. His department and Parliament had changed all that, and now he challenged them to go for a six-mile walk anywhere in the Three Kingdoms and one Principality—(laughter)—without seeing a fine big all brick and earthenware asylum, with plenty of beds

and plenty of drains and plenty of lavatories and plenty of lunatics. The ideal he and his officers cherished—and a fine set of men they were, as hardworking a set of men as they'd find in a month's march—(loud cheers)—was efficiency. They did not mind spending money, they had no objection to disbursing the cash nexus, but they were determined, yes, and resolved, to get good value for their money, to see, as they used to say in his young days, that the butcher gave them a pound of butcher's meat for the price of a pound of butcher's meat. (Laughter and cheers.) All the asylums under the control and supervision and regulation of him and his staff had to be kept in the good order and condition worthy of the greatest Empire on which the sun had never set, now reigned over by his gracious Majesty King George the Fifth,

and long might he reign. (Loud cheers.)

What had been the result of the work which he and his assistants had had the honour and privilege and pleasure of performing for his Majesty? He would tell them. They had not made a new heaven and a new earth. He was not like some friends of his who supposed that you could create five-minute Utopias or Millenniums—while you wait. “Quick come, quick go” was his motto, and for his part he thought he would get to where they wanted to get sooner by walking round the field on the good, round, stolid highroad than by trying to walk over the field and getting stuck in an enormous and colossal bog. But statistics were as safe a guide as they could obtain in this imperfect world, and the statistics of Whitehall, he ventured to say, were as

good as any German or French or Venezuelan or Monte Carloan statistics, or any other foreign statistics. If they looked in the statistics of the Local Government Board's Deputy-Sub-Assistant Medical Inspector of Asylums and Factories they would elicit some facts which were in his humble and small opinion worth more than a pyramid of philosophisings or a mountain of moralisings. The number of children between the ages of 12 and 16 who were mad in the year 1837 was in England, 127,489; in Scotland, 27,631; in Wales, 57,201; in Ireland, 37,615. In 1857 those figures had gone down to 5261 in England, 42,106 in the gallant little principality, 10,210 in the land of the thistle, and 21,105 in old Erin. (Cheers and a laugh.) In the present year of grace, the eighth of his gracious Majesty's glorious reign, the figures were: for

Scotland, 61,158 ; for England, 189,234 ; for Wales, 98,720 ; for Ireland, 22,232. That meant a steady drop, a drop which now amounted to 22·6 for England, 80·3 for Scotland—(“ I am a Scotchman,” said Mr Burns with a sly smile, which evoked hearty mirth)—21·7 for Wales, and no less than 97·2 per cent. for Ireland. The average curves of senile docility for the same period show what we might justly and properly call a similar progressive decline ; they had fallen from 1·0234 per 10,000 of the population in the year of the Repeal of the Corn Laws to 0·12789 per 10,000 to-day. The dipsomaniacs between the ages of 29 and 30 in our public asylums and homes numbered 82,658,003 in 1852 ; to-day those figures had gone down by more than 1½ per cent., and he had every reason to believe that if he stayed at the Local Government Board

and his officials and medical officers, yes, and clerks, stayed with him and worked with the same devotion and zeal and industry and altruistic enthusiasm for the service of the public who were their employers as they had shown in the past, there would be another reduction next year. In his own trade, the Engineers, the returns showed that lunacy and religious mania and all other forms of feeble-mindedness had decreased from 8·2 per 10,000 in 1895 to 8·1 per 10,000 in 1896, then to 8·0 per 10,000 in 1897, 7·9 per 10,000 in 1898, 7·8 per 10,000 in 1899, 7·7 per 10,000 in 1900, 7·6 per 10,000 in 1901, 7·5 per 10,000 in 1902, 7·4 per 10,000 in 1903, 7·3 per 10,000 in 1904, 7·2 per 10,000 in 1905, 7·1 per 10,000 in 1906, 7·0 per 10,000 in 1907, 6·9 per 10,000 in 1908, and 6·8 per 10,000 in 1909. In the other great trades of the country the same

pleasant and prosperous phenomenon could be seen by any man with half an eye, and he could give them figures—(here a member of the audience interjected a remark which could not be distinctly heard from the Press table)—to show that he and his department and the State were doing their best for unfortunate people who had a slate off the roof and a little bit off the top. “You were,” concluded the right honourable gentleman amid cheers, “in a minority fifty years ago, but you are in a still smaller minority now.”

As Mr Burns was marching briskly away from the establishment to catch the eight-three to Waterloo, a Suffragette who had been disguised, after the fashion of these ingenious and ever-resourceful ladies, as a matron, sprang down from a tree where she had been concealed and attempted to thrust a petition into his coat-pocket.

The burly President of the Local Government Board tossed her aside, and, turning to the Governor who was escorting him, waggishly remarked : " I guess and opine you'd better keep her here."

The Sort of Poems Modern Poets write

I

THE EXQUISITE SONNET

No purple mars the chalice ; not a bird
Shrills o'er the solemn silence of thy fame.
No echo of the mist that knows no name
Dims the fierce darkness of the odorous word.
The shadowy sails of all the world are stirred,
The poms of hell go down in utter flame,
And never a magic master stands to shame
The hollow of the hill the Titans heard.

O move not, cease not, heart ! Time's acolyte
Frustrates forlorn the windows of the west
And beats the blinding of our bitter tears,
Immune in isolation ; whilst the night
Smites with her stark immortal palimpsest
The green arcades of immemorial years !

II

THE HELL-FOR-LEATHER BALLAD

(’TIS a mile and a mile as a man may march
With Hope and his sins for load
Or ever he win from the Marble Arch
To the end of the Tottenham Road !)

The wind was cold and the sky was black
And the lights were ranged for a feast
When we turned our steps from the Edgware
track
And faced the yearning East.

O fair is the rose and fair the vine
And sweet the sound of the lute !
But Selfridge’s towered like a Sphinx’s shrine
And mocked us, massive and mute !

Dark on our path lay the wreaking wrath
Of a thousand nights and days ;
But there like the fangs that a boarhound hath
Stood the challenging gates of Jay’s !

And we steeled our breasts and we clashed our
teeth

Though our limbs were numb with pain,
Though the jaws of the pavement clung
beneath

As each tortuous yard was slain.

Great blood-gouts fell where the Circus yawned

And a drop and a drop (O Christ !)

Where Lewis and Evans and Marshall and
Snellgrove

Did keep their tongueless tryst !

The white lamp flared and the windows stared
(Each pane was a jeering face !)

And ghosts that lurked in the doorways glared
At the murderers of space.

But our feet were deep in the furrow set

Our hands were firm on the plough,

And there rang in ears that could not forget
The voiceless cry of the Now.

And the last mile died and the last hour sped,
And as stars to the aching Soul
When the ashes of dawn gasped rapid and red
Glowed the portals of the goal.

(So we found a fane for our weary feet
And a pen and a pipe and a pot
And we made us a Ballad of Oxford Street. . . .
And why the Devil not ?)

III

THE FINE-CONTEMPT-FOR-CIVILISATION - AND - GEOGRAPHY - VERY-FRATERNAL - WITH - THE - ELEMENTS-PLEIN-AIR PIECE

WE have had our fill, my heart,
Of the haunts of men
We will tread the stones of these cities
Not ever again.

So I take the road to the sunset
My staff in my hand
To make my peace ere I die
With the sea and the land.

For the deeps are calling, calling,
And the clouds sail slow,
And the wild in my breast has wakened
And I rise and go.

Over the great wide spaces
To the fields of morn
To the hills and silent places
Where the clouds are born.

Where the curlew wheels o'er the heather
That never man trod
In the shine and the windy weather
On the uplands of God.

Over the seas and the mountains
To the great world's end
With the sun and the rain for my brothers
And the wind for my friend.

IV

THE POETRY-UGHT-TO-BE-FREED FROM-CONVENTIONAL-SHACKLES STUNT

THE sun sets.

Not a breath of wind stirs the surface of the
sea,

Not a ripple breaks the sheen of its placid
mirror,

And the fields,

Weary of the heat and labour of the day,

Lie motionless and green-brown as the day
dies

Immobile in the perfection of rest well-won.

Never a sound threads the air save the distant
crooning song

Of a herdsman,

And the voices of grazing sheep

Bleating

Quietly.

And the faint murmur, far, far out over the
waters of the splash of oars
From a brown-sailed fisherman's boat whose
canvas idly hangs
From the masts.
High in the west
The battlemented clouds are piled
Red and purple and dark blue, all girdled and
glowing
With the golden effulgence of the orb of Apollo
now half below the horizon.
In the east with great strides
Night comes on
Inviolable, indomitable, immense,
Brushing wide heaven with the stridence of her
rustling wings,
Enacting once again the old old tragedy with
her pitiless wings,
Striking fear into the heart of man
And death into the heart of the day;
Proclaiming, exultant triumphant, with steely
clarion the victory of her titanic
wings. . . .

The whole air is filled full with the clamour
of innumerable wings.

The sun goes down

Pop !

V

THE NEWSPAPER PASTORAL

(*N.B.—Every other line must be in italics.*)

THE summer is a-coming and the bumble bee's
a-humming,

(An' it's O to be with you, dear, by the
shining Devon sea!)

And the finches in the coppice know the
golden whin's a-blooming,

(An' it's O to be in Devon when the bloom
is on the bee!)

Last year with thoughtless rapture we trod the
springy turf.

(An' it's O to be in Devon when the bloom
is on the bee!)

Whilst we watched the light-foot breakers
rolling on the mighty surf,

(An' it's sweet it was with you, dear, by the
shining Devon sea!)

And we saw the ringdoves cooing in the little
vale below,

(It was Youth and Life and Love, dear, by
the shining Devon sea!)

Whilst the East was all a-gloom and the West
was all aglow.

(O I lost my heart in Devon when the bloom
was on the bee!)

But now my footsteps wander through the
city's toil and bustle,

(An' I long to be in Devon where the bloom
is on the bee,)

An' the rushes are a-rustle and the tushes are
a-tustle,

(An' I eat my heart for you, dear, and the
shining Devon sea).

VI

THE MY-OATH-IF-YOU-ONLY-KNEW- WHAT-A-LIFE-I'VE-LED WHEEZE

I CROSSED the outer gates of fire.

I scaled the purple towers of sin

And brake the doors, and walked within

The midnight chamber of desire.

I burnt my brows with frankincense,

My cheeks with nard and myrrh I smeared ;

I bathed in crimson blood, nor feared

To slake the slakeless thirsts of sense.

Dead women lay about my feet ;

I trod on them, I did not reck,

I bound their hair about my neck,

And ate their breasts, for they were sweet.

Strange beasts did lurk about my ways
That round my throat their folds did twist ;
I drank their saffron breath and kissed
Their snouts of pearl and chrysoprase.

And things I did I may not tell
With men whose names may not be told,
Strange men whose breasts were tipped
with gold,
Whose eyes did gleam with sparks of hell.

I cursed the saints, yea with a curse
I flung God from the pedestal. . . .

VII

THE PROSE - POEM - OH - SO - SIMPLE

I SAT in my chair.

I gazed into the fire, the fire with its caverns
of light, with its luminous recesses the
pulses of which undulate, rise and fall,
heave and subside, like the bosom of some
beloved woman.

The fire with its wavering rainbow tongues.

I sat in my chair, gazing,

On a sudden I heard a step, soft as a snowflake,

There behind my chair, standing yet not
standing, suspended as it were yet not
suspended, stood the form of a man, which
was neither of earth nor of heaven. Pale
was his brow. His eyes of a profundity
and liquidity like the liquidity and pro-
fundity of pools in the utter depths of
some remote sea where keel never swam
nor lead sounded, shone with a light that

was neither of heaven nor of earth. His cheeks were faintly hollowed as with the last loving touch of a sculptor's thumb, and his white tremulous lips, beardless as a boy's, spoke yet did not speak.

"I have come," was the message.

The stranger turned towards the door with a slight beckoning gesture.

I knew him and I followed.

VIII

THE BACK - TO - THE - LAND - AND - FEDERATED-DIALECTS MORCEAU

THE yellow leaves from yonder tree
Is vallin' wan by wan,
Jist like they valled on 'er and me
This vourty year agone.
The saft and wistful drop of them
Oi nivir cud abide
Syne angels tuk awa' ma gem
The year that Mary died.

Gor dal 'ee zur, woy, stroike me pink
'Er wuz my ownly j'y ;
'Er bore me fust an' lawst, I think,
Ten maidens an' a b'y.
Ten maidens an' a b'y, Ochone !
But now they've wandered wide,
The youngest left me 'ere alone
The year that Mary died.

IX

THE OTHER - WORLDLY - SPIRIT - OF - CELTICISM - DON'T - YOU - KNOW LYRIC

SEVEN dead men, Brigit,
Came from the sea
(Mist on the waters
And sorrow in the tree).

Seven pallid men, Brigit,
Cold from the sea,
And each with his strange eyes
Whispered to me :

“O, sad voyagers,
Whither are ye faring ?
Do ye bring a tale of grief
For desolate Eirinn ? ”

“Oisinn and Dubb we be,
And Cucutullitore,
And Fish and Fash and Fingall,”
They spoke never more.

But each wove a warp, a warp,
And each wove a weft
Of lost stars and suns forlorn
And moons bereft.

X

THE EPIGRAMMATIC EPIGRAM

YOU say, my friend, that Gladstone always bid
The light be darkness and the night be
light,

I quite agree ; doubtless you may be right ;
All I can say is—Gladstone never did.

XI

THE HANDS-ACROSS-THE-SEA WISH-WASH

SONS of the Empire, bond and free,
 Yellow and black and brown,
I greet you all where'er you be,
 Here ere the sun goes down ;
Here, while the sunset flushes red
 The waves of England's main,
I breathe the prayer our fathers said,
 And sing the song again.

The ancient song that struck the sky
 When Roman standards flew,
The song that smote the bastions high
 Of Philip's recreant crew ;
The song that Drake and Nelson sang
 When Heaven flared with war,
And echoed with the shots that rang
 O'er baffled Trafalgar.

Sons of the Empire, Britain's sons,
Here, as the darkness falls,
Clear o'er the files of Britain's guns
The warning clarion calls ;
O, and I bid you now " God speed,
Quit you like men, be true " ;
Stand by us in the hour of need
And we shall stand by you.

XII (AND LAST)

THE IN-MEMORIAM ODE

LAY on him laurel, rosemary, and rue,
Roses and trailers of the sweet wood-bine,
Gentle forget-me-not (was he not true ?)
And sunflowers (did not his verses shine ?)
O, pilfer all the sweets of all the wood,
And all the musky blossoms of the vale
(For was he not the brother of our blood ?)
And strew them where he lies so still, so
pale.

A light, a light has gone, a star has fled,
A sun is dimmed that lit the whole wide sky,
The flame that burned a hemisphere is dead
(O, and our stricken spirits murmur, "Why ?"
Vain murmuring, vain sorrow, vain regret !)
Is there no hope for us, no hope, not one ?

Night thunders, "None!" but we may not
forget

The wondrous glory of him who was our sun.

There should be twenty-four verses more ("not counting the women and little children," as Rabelais would have said), but these are enough.

The Sort of Prose Articles Modern Prose-Writers write

I

THE DESCRIPTIVE-PEREGRINA- TORY

THE sun, a ruddy and coruscating globe, was sinking over the low blue hills to the westward as I mounted the long white road that leads up to the ancient village of Molineaux-des-Sept-Vierges. Down in the valley to my left some cows were quietly grazing. They munched stolidly, imperturbably, at the lush green grass of that rich Normandy bottom just as they had munched any time these twenty centuries past. So the Visigoths saw them as they swept southward on their irresistible way to the doomed and wait-

ing valleys of Spain. So the Franks, emerging, blue of eye and flaxen of hair, from the recesses of their German forests. So Charlemagne the Emperor, master of half Europe, as he rode quietly one day, maybe, with his swart and invulnerable train of warriors up the valley of the rapid Yolle, along the skirts of the Rocher Du Grand Boulanger, and thuswise up the little road trodden now by feet that Charlemagne never knew. They are all gone over, and the glory of them has departed. The Emperor lies—he has lain these many centuries—in his great tomb at Aix. And the munching kine remain, and the long white road, and the little town on the hill-top.

The trees by the roadside rustled as a little wind from over the distant sea breathed across hill and plain, bearing with it a savour of salt that smote sweetly

and soothingly on the heated brow of the dusty and weary traveller. Somewhere a sheep bleated. Somewhere an unseen shepherd whistled softly to himself a fragment of some forgotten air. It was a plaintive air, wistful, sad, and a little melancholy. He was out of sight.

As I passed under a little archaic gate that guards the entrance to the village it was already dark. Here and there along the cobble-paved street, with its nests of low stone houses shrouded in the gathering gloom, the lights began to twinkle out in the leaded windows. First one, then two, then three, then four. They were yellow, that warm and consoling yellow that one sometimes sees in Southern countries when darkness falls and the lights are lit one by one. In a small cottage to my left a woman's shadow passed across the blind. She was feeding

her baby. The stones rang beneath my tread. The world was very peaceful. . . .

The landlord was a jovial old fellow, with hard features tanned by exposure, a bald pate, and little beady black eyes that twinkled when he laughed. He had fought, so he told me, at Sedan. He had taken part in that disastrous retreat from Poppot-Le-Boom when De Lozay (brother of that De Lozay whose heroism during the siege of the Pekin Legations was afterwards to be blazoned in letters of gold upon the scroll of history) had made his oft-quoted remark, "*Mes braves, hier j'étais qu'est-ce que c'est que ca, demain je serais je ne sais quoi. Mais qu'importe?*" Twice he had been wounded, once seriously; and on that occasion he had been nursed back to life by the woman who afterwards became his wife. "*Elle est mort, monsieur,*" said he, with the

nearest approach to sadness that I saw him display; and as for one fleeting instant he gazed into the great wood fire, the romance of this weather-beaten child of the French earth suddenly unrolled before me. Strong in spirit, grey and steadfast of eye, she had been frail of body as a flower. Carefully—very carefully—he had tended her, watching in agony as those sweet and wan and uncomplaining features grew tenser and whiter under the cruel hand of death. And at last she had gone and left him alone. Somewhere, I knew, in this old, rambling house with its low ceilings and its heavy furniture of oak, was a room consecrated to her memory, a room where the yellow blinds were always drawn, where a four-poster bed slept under a quiet old counterpane of silk, where an old dress or two, maybe, hung undisturbed on the hooks on which

their wearer long ago had placed them where a faint scent of dead rose-leaves and lavender vaguely pervaded the air.

I went to bed and slept the sleep of the just. No dreams broke in on the sleep that the kindly god shed like a dew upon my tired body. The first thing of which I was conscious was the little maid-servant's charming pipe, "*Voici d'eau chaud de m'sieu'.*" Somewhat leisurely I dressed, content with myself and the world. Was it a mean thing to have traversed all France from the Val du Piou-Piou over the broad plains of the Bobais and the Pimpaigne, to have forded deep rivers and scaled high mountains, until here I was at last at the head of the Yolle Valley and with my face set towards the Sarche estuary and the Ile d'O?

I ate an enormous breakfast, settled

my bill, strapped my knapsack to my back, and emerged through the cool porch into the steep street already hot from the steady smiting of the morning sun. It had been empty at night ; it was little more populous in the full blaze of day. A group of idle, sunburnt women stood placidly gossiping in a doorway ; three scraggy fowls scratched the ground and pecked after the manner of their kind ; a mongrel puppy, very concentrated on his work, nosed about in a small but evil-smelling heap of rubbish outside the old church that had been built by a pious twelfth-century crusader home from the wars around the Sepulchre of Christ.

Out of the higher gate, a low arch in the crumbling and lizard-haunted wall, a magnificent prospect met my eyes. The slope had been very abrupt, and by mounting a little rock at the side of the

road I could look right down over the village and along the valley to the plains from which I had come. There in the foreground was the church tower. Beyond it was the declivity up which the road climbed. And then, with the Yolle a silver ribbon in the nearer distance, miles beyond miles of wooded pastures, mottled with grazing flocks and stretching away into the bluish haze of the southern provinces.

There was no one on the road. The world was very quiet.

Somewhere out of sight a shepherd whistled a fragment from some long-forgotten song.

II

THE CENTENARY-ESTIMATE

IT is a hundred years to-day since Estcourt Peakyblinder, one of the most puzzling and at the same time most fascinating figures in nineteenth-century literary history, was born, and almost fifty since he died. During that period what storms have raged around his personality and his work, what lava streams of savage denunciation, what glittering floods of unrestrained panegyric have been provoked by them! Old men still living remember the fierce controversy that broke out when he published *The Tragedy of Genghis Khan*. England was rent in twain by it, and for months it was scarcely

safe for a known friend of Peakyblinder's to show himself in the street. Another tumult, hardly less violent, burst forth in the early eighties when Mrs Pipkin Pooke published her collection of letters. Those letters, which threw a blaze of light upon the hitherto obscure question of the poet's relations with Sophonisba Sock, his first love, with the famous Mrs Perkinson, and with the infamous Aurelia Mumpson, were for a whole year the subject of a literary war of unprecedented ferocity, with Blair of *The Weekly Periodical* on one side and the doughty Limpetter and the brilliant staff he had gathered around him on *The Sempiternal Review* on the other. The echoes of that battle have not yet died down. It is possible that they will never entirely die down. But we have got perhaps far enough away from the pristine heats of the fray to

survey the subject calmly and dispassionately. As Professor Algernon Jones so penetratingly says in his recent informative study, "We do not at this time of day think with Blair that Peakyblinder was a monster, nor, on the other hand, can we entirely countenance the view of Limpetter that he was a saint. Would it not be truer to say that he was just an ordinary man, not all bad and not all good, common clay illuminated with something of the divine fire, wilful yet lovable (perhaps for the very reason that he was wilful), son of our ancient mother earth, erring, assoiled with dross, yet 'trailing clouds of glory' from that ineffable beyond which was his spirit's home?" And after all, what do the details of such a man's daily life matter to us? Were it not savouring of ingratitude if we should prolong wordy warfare over the dead

deeds of one who has left us so much that is priceless and immortal?

For regarding the permanent value of the bulk of his work there can now be no dispute. The consensus of modern opinion is at one with Peakyblinder's contemporaries in condemning as dull and lacking in the true flame of inspiration "Herodotus at Halicarnassus," the "Hebdomadal Hemistiches," and the majority of the sonnets of the middle period. Most of these works were written (though in some cases only in rough draft) during the poet's two visits to Dongola, when, as is well known, a strange lassitude oppressed him and he usually had to use physical force to compel himself to take up the pen. For a different reason we could most of us do without certain of the lyrics and some passages in *The Tragedy of Genghis Khan*. The outcry against

this latter play at the time of its publication was certainly an exaggerated one. In some of the verses to which most exception was taken at the time the modern eye finds it hard indeed to detect the causes of offence. What reader to-day, for instance, can understand how our mid-Victorian predecessors found flagrant indecency in such lines as :

“The moon
Unveils her argent bosom to the sky” ;

or religious heterodoxy in Sigismund's despairing cry :

“Yea, natheless, but I will
Tear down the towering heavens from their seat.”

But in many instances the accusations were all too true. No one can read such things as the second and fourth stanzas (one forbears from quoting them) of “Pan to Aphrodite,” or the middle section of

“Campaspe,” or (disgusting in a different way) the terrible “Threnody of Tumours” without experiencing a blush of shame that such loathsome excrescences should have blotched the matchless fame of a Peakyblinder. He might well have left such work to lesser men.

Yet think of the treasures, serene and undefiled, that we have to set over against all this! Peakyblinder possessed in supreme, in unparalleled, measure two great gifts. No other English poet—saving always Shakespeare—has had his power of rending, as it were, the veil from the human soul at its moments of greatest intensity. He considered (as the old Latin tag one used to learn at school had it) nothing alien to him that was human; but the great, gripping crises of the emotions and the spirit were his own peculiar province. Scene after scene from

the crucial acts of his dramas has already passed into the region where it is above and beyond criticism. Such scenes as that in which Mercia, maddened with blood, nails the dead Cicero's tongue to the rostrum which but a few years before had rung with his glowing perorations, are already classics. "Red tongue, talk through thy blood," she says. Even at the hundredth time of repeating, the terse, blazingly savage and significant words never fail to produce their thrill. The same gift is illustrated again and again in the lyrics. Little scarlet cameos they are, each one impregnated with some essential aspect of the tortured human soul. Quotations were superfluous. Why quote what all must be familiar with?

And the second great gift with which the gods at his birth endowed Estcourt Peakyblinder was the gift of music. Mr

T. Le Page Jiggins, in his "Reminiscences of a Busy Life," states (and the statement has gained wide currency) that Gollock, the novelist, who at one time was among Peakyblinder's most intimate associates, told him on more than one occasion that the poet was entirely unsusceptible to vocal and instrumental music. He repeats, moreover, an anecdote (which in my opinion is of at least doubtful authenticity) to the effect that Henry Bell, the critic, and Theophilus Boo, the Dutch Liberal statesman (at that time on a visit to this country, of which his mother was a native, though born of Dutch parents), once took Peakyblinder to a People's Concert at the Crystal Palace (then newly opened), and that at the close of the evening the author of *Genghis Khan* quite innocently asked the astonished Boo whether an oboe was the same thing as an organ. This is

scarcely credible ; but it seems established beyond possibility of denial that Peaky-blinder had not what is commonly called an "ear for music." Nevertheless, paradoxical though the assertion may seem, he was perhaps the most illustrious musician that England has ever produced. He was master of the whole range of harmony and melody. He knew how to sweep men off their feet with a resistless pæan of gladness pouring along with great clashes and crashes of cunningly orchestrated sound. Now he throbs forth some rolling funeral march, thunderous with the footsteps of the timeless dead ; now he sighs some sad and intangible melody in a minor key ; and anon he is making us move our feet to the lilt of some merry dance tune that Rameau or Strauss might have written. Truly he was one of the greatest musicians that ever lived. But

his materials were not sharps and flats but consonants and vowels, not triplets and tied minims but anapæsts and spondees. It is well that on this his hundredth anniversary England should lay a chaplet of laurel on his grave.

III

THE SOUL-OF-A-FOREIGN- CAPITAL SPECIES

BANGKOK is the city of a dream. She dreams her timeless dream at the gate of the desert. The centuries have rolled over her, the legions of conqueror after conqueror have trampled her underfoot, but the old city remains as she was, clad in the shadowy and iridescent hues of the twilight and the dawn, wearing her old inscrutable smile. Her tall towers have been hurled to the ground, her streets have run with blood, fire has blackened and scarred her ; but always she has risen again from her ashes, unchanged, yet the same. Her body has been ravished and defiled, but her soul, after two thousand

years, is still virginal and unspotted. Veiled in the impenetrable yet impalpable wrappings of her sphinx-like mystery, lonely, mournful, all-wise, all-sorrowful, she rises a spiritual thing between the illimitable sands and that sacred, softly flowing river the source of which no man knows, a city apart, a being not of time but of eternity.

One reaches Bangkok by Penoccident line from Marseilles. The overland route is difficult, dangerous, infested with brigands, and expensive, and takes forty-two days longer to traverse than that by sea. For practical purposes, therefore, it is out of the question. The boats, though small, are comfortable and fast. Twenty-three days after eating your breakfast in Paris you enter the estuary of the Ho-Hum, and six hours more, steaming with the tide, finds the vessel slowly

heaving to at the great stone quay under the shadow of the principal mosque. The scene as one disembarks is one of incredible confusion. Bells clang, cannon boom, a horde of dusky porters rush about with one's luggage, shouting in a babel of discordant tongues, excited vendors of shawls, sweetmeats, metalwork, and the thousand and one other trifles that appeal to the heart of the traveller, scurry hither and thither, gesticulating wildly and chattering like an army of monkeys. Here and there is a woman veiled from head to foot, gazing at one with great black eyes through the holes in the tarboosh that the Sufi religion ordains for every woman when she is outside the kraal of her lord and master ; and at the back of the crowd stand, pensive and gloomy, a group of beetle-browed priests with flowing beards and quaint triangular caps (not

unlike a species of elongated dahabiyeh) upon their heads. We have left the West behind us. Here in this fantastic town, with its minarets and its cupolas, its narrow streets of blank white walls, its rice bazaars and its extraordinary blaze of bright colours, we have crossed the threshold into another world. We have left behind us the world of hurry and bustle, of tramcars and electric light, of post offices and public-houses, of sewers and suffragettes, and entered a realm where nothing has altered since the birth of time, and where every fairy tale comes true.

Needless to say, the hotel accommodation is not of the best. The principal establishments—the Hotel de Londres and the Hotel Asquith—face one another across the principal square. Neither of them can boast more than twenty bed-

rooms, and at the former, where my wife and I stayed, there was not even a bath to be procured save in the large tank in the courtyard that did duty as a recreation ground for the pack elephants that came across the desert from Abyssinia with the numerous caravans. The proprietor, a stoutish, yellow gentleman with the euphonious name of Chook, knew a little English. In early life he had (so he told me) been a member of a troupe of jugglers that had toured through Europe, including the British Isles. He knew Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Stow-in-the-Wold, and, of course, London. But as the vocabulary which he had acquired was mostly of a denunciatory and imprecatory character it was not of very much assistance. Happily my wife be-thought her of a visit to the British Consul. He, poor man, was delighted

to see us, as no British tourists had visited the city—"infernal hole," he called it)—since the beginning of the last rainy season. After giving me a glass of really excellent whisky, he proceeded with the utmost despatch to send for an interpreter. In five minutes the man arrived. Like the rest of his nationality, he turned out to be a most arrant swindler. We knew, though the knowledge was of little avail to us, as we were helpless in his hands, that he cheated us most outrageously whenever he made a purchase on our behalf. But that is the price the traveller in strange places of the earth must always expect to pay for the satisfaction of his curiosity; and after all, we might have gone farther and fared much worse, for Abdul Gomez, though he himself defrauded us right and left, would never allow anyone else to do so. Once at

least he proved a very present help in time of trouble. My wife, when speeding along in a rickshaw, had accidentally thrown a banana skin in the face of a wooden deity that happened at that moment to be passing along the street with a procession of ragged devotees. It seemed for a few anxious moments as though we were going to be the central figures of an ugly street row. Things had already taken an awkward turn, and the leader of the mob was ominously sharpening his wicked-looking curved yashmak when Abdul arrived upon the scene, and, by explaining briefly that we were English, speedily cleared up the misunderstanding.

Wonderful though this dream city of the East is at all times, it is perhaps at the annual festival that it is most alluring, most challenging, most marvellous of all. The festival is held in honour of the

goddess Quog (properly speaking, the goddess of toads, though it may be doubted whether one modern Bangkokian in a thousand knows of the lady's association with those unattractive animals), and for a whole week the population, men, women, and children, give themselves up to a delirious riot of worship and amusement. All the houses are gaily draped with silk hangings—green, yellow, red, blue, orange, indigo and violet. Flags stream merrily from every flagpole; triumphal arches guard the entrance to every street, even in the humblest quarters; dancing, singing and praying go on incessantly from morning till sundown, and the purveyors of fruit and cooling drinks drive a roaring trade. As evening falls a thousand heavy and intoxicating odours rise from streets and river. The songs subside, the noise of

the dancing feet is gradually stilled, the Present fades away, the Past comes out, spreading great wings, and broods over the great city. Night and the eternities have reasserted their sway. The heat and excitement of the joyous day have, dying, left behind them a subtle essence that gives the key to much that one had not understood in the character and religion of this strange people. The flames on the roofs of the goddess' temple sink and die away ; the smoke floats off and is dispelled ; nothing breaks the stillness save the wail of some river bird and the weak cry of a new-born babe. Here, under the alien stars of this alien sky, the great processes of life are going on and will not be denied.

That was ten years ago. Probably if I went back to Bangkok to-day I should find the railway there and taxi-cabs

awaiting arrivals at the station, and lifts in all the houses, and French bookshops and cookshops in the great square. The clamorous West will invade the place—may have invaded it already; iron and electricity and steam and “education” will shatter the fair illusions that have survived countless centuries of storm and stress. Yet even now, I fancy, to the man of seeing eye and understanding heart the old, dreamy Bangkok, all-wise, all-sorrowful, swathed in her garments of starshine and the declining sun’s last ineluctable breath, will reveal herself as of old—a symbol, a spirit, a reminder of things too deep for tears, a monument more perennial than brass.

IV

THE PHILOSOPHICAL- LIGHTER-THAN-AIR

It is a curious thing about most modern people—it is possible that the ancients sometimes exhibited the same trait—that they will insist on making confusions. Sometimes they even make confusions worse confounded, but that particular species of the genus need not now detain us. More curious still—as Alice should have said but did not—their habit is not to confuse similar things but dissimilar things. They do not confuse Miss Marie Corelli with Mr Hall Caine ; they do not confuse six of one with half-a-dozen of the other ; they do not even commit the

very pardonable error of failing to distinguish between Mr Asquith and Mr Balfour. The case, indeed, is quite the reverse. They have a strange and almost horrible, a magical and most tragical power of differentiating at a glance between things that to the ordinary human eye would seem to be identical in every feature. They can draw a confident line between the Hegelians and the Pragmatists (of whom I am not one); they can call the Primitive Methodists, the Swedenborgians and the Socialists by their names; confront them with a flock of sheep and you will find them as expert ovine onomatologists as any wild and wonderful shepherd who ever brooded in the sunsets on the remote and inaccessible hills of Dartmoor. But put before them two or three things that are really and fundamentally different,

and they will be almost pitifully at a loss to detect the slightest diversity. They will know one octopus from another, but they will not know either from a lobster. They will know the average Tory from the average Socialist, but they will not know one kind of Socialist from another kind of Socialist.

This profound and far-reaching truth has frequently struck me; and, as you doubtless know, I have as frequently expressed it. Our ancestors (who were much less foolish than some of their descendants) never hit the nail on the head with more stupendous and earth-shaking force than when they laid it down as a rigid and unquestionable axiom that the truth cannot be too often restated. It is that inexpugnable fact that plunges our modern pessimists into the nethermost abysses of suicidal despair; it is that

saline and saltating fact that raises in the breasts of our optimists a fierce and holy joy. The essence of a great truth is that it is stale. Sometimes it is merely musty, sometimes it is almost terribly mouldy. But mouldiness is not merely a sign of vitality—which is truncated immortality; it is the sole and single, the one and only sign of vitality. Truth has gathered the wrinkles of age on her brows and the dust of ages on the skirts of her garment. A thing can no more be true and fresh than it can be new and mouldy. If a man told me he had discovered a new truth I should politely but firmly reprimand him precisely as I should a man who informed me, with however candid and engaging an air, that he had just seen moss growing on the back of a new-born child.

Meditating thus, I was walking last

Tuesday night down the splendid and awful solitudes of the Old Kent Road. Diabolic shapes grinned and moved in the secret and sorrowful shadows of the shop doorways, and every looming warehouse seemed a monstrous sibyl writhing gnarled and boding fingers at the hurrying clouds. Suddenly as I turned a corner I saw, low in the sky where the houses were broken, a solitary star, a huge red star glowing and flickering with all the flames of hell, a star that in a more religious and less purblind age men would have whispered to be prophetic of awful and convulsive things. It held my feet as with gyves of iron. I gazed at its scarlet lamp, quaking and shivering like a man in a palsy. And then, full in my back, I felt a strange and horrible blow, and there rang in my ears a voice sepulchral and thunderously

muffled as the voice of one come from the dead.

There were words, human articulate words, and they were addressed to me. There is something peculiarly mystic and terrible about words that proceed from an unknown mouth through impenetrable darkness. It is that, I think, that must have been the first principle grasped by the hairy and horrible men of the primeval forests. They went to some cave for a refuge and found a religion. They went there for a gorge and found a god. They went there for a repast and found a ritual. They entered the cave expecting to have a snooze, and when they left it they found they had a sacerdotalism. As I heard the loathsome voice hailing me through the darkness as some evil minion of Beelzebub might hail a lost and errant soul through

the pierceless and intangible grottoes of the outer void, it suddenly, I say, flashed across my consciousness that the impalpable stranger was addressing me in articulate, not to say terse, syllables of the English tongue. If there is one thing more than another that accounts for the widespread use of the English language it is its incomparable and almost murderous terseness. A man once told me that Bulgarian was still more terse; another man (presuming, I fear, on an old friendship) assured me a few months later that Bantu was terser than either; but as Bulgarian and Bantu are studies of my youth that I have long left behind me, I am afraid I am not quite competent to express a final opinion on the matter. Suffice it that you would no more attempt to increase the terseness of the English tongue than you would

attempt to augment the flexibility of an elephant's trunk by the insertion of an arrangement, however delicate and dexterous, of cogwheels.

His words were terse, but at first I did not altogether fathom their meaning. "How," I pondered, "surely there can be nothing sanguinary about me. I have not shaved myself for days, and I have not to my knowledge committed a murder for at least three weeks. And if there is anything markedly mural about my eyes I confess I was unaware of the fact. Indeed, it is not altogether plain to me how any eye can be mural. My friend, you must be mistaken."

Summoning up the courage that is often a strong characteristic of really brave men, I spoke to him. There was, in that dreadful and desolate place, under the fiery blaze of that lurid and lecherous

planet, something hollow and awful even about the tones of my own voice. It echoed along the walls and wailed round the corners like the foggy clarion of a marshland ghost. But my heart was set like steel, and unquailing I cried, "I think, my friend, you have made a mistake."

And an error that was a type and a symbol became also a text.

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When I had spoken he fled. Which showed that he was neither a man nor a democrat, but a puny and pessimistic modern—in all probability a Nietzschean. Under the sky, now cloudless and sprinkled with silver stars, I pursued my way, watching for the banners of the dawn, and listening for her trumpets that knew the youth of the world.

V

THE PRETTY FABLE

THE sun beat down pitilessly. The illimitable sands stretched out tawny and blindingly hot to the horizon. The blue sky trembled and burned with a fierceness that seemed as if it could never be dimmed.

The Man toiled on beneath his load. How long had he been walking thus over these parched wastes? Centuries, thousands of years, perhaps . . . he had lost all count of time. He could not remember the days when he had been free. It seemed to him as though from the dawn of the world he had been treading the sands, scorched by the rays of that torrid sun and mocked by the intense

blue of that yawning gulf over his head. His back bent beneath his burden and great goutts of sweat gathered on his brow and rolled down his furrowed cheek.

No, there was no hope. For thousands of years he had been alone. Every century at sunset a Shape had passed him. One had passed him yesterday. He had held out pleading hands to it, but his reward had been gibes of scorn. And every Shade as it swept past him had added to his load!

One came and put an Island on his back, and one a Sea. One had burdened him with a Yoke of Oxen, and one with a Great Cheese. There had come a gaunt Shape, more horrible than the others, and he had brought in his hand for addition to the man's burden a Great Ship with sides of iron and a heart of iron; and another, whose teeth were

made of diamonds and his nose of a single pearl, had flung on the bowed shoulders the Corpse of a Butterfly.

He was very weary.

Mile after mile he walked on, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. His eyes were leaden in their hue, like the eyes of sick cattle. His brow, lined and scored with the furrows of ages, streamed with Great Gouts of Sweat. Over his bare shoulders fell a few grey and mud-stained locks, ragged and pathetic, but still unkempt. His chest and feet were bare, also his poor feet, that were bruised and bleeding with the long journey; and round his loins was a wisp of cloth.

But Resolution was in his heart.

It chanced that, toiling on over the hot sands, he espied a Rock by the way-side. He was very weary. With an

effort—for he had become so accustomed to walking in a straight line that he could scarcely compel his feet to turn aside from the direct track—he turned aside and sought its shelter. For it was very hot.

He lay down.

And as he lay down, with his burden still clinging to his shoulders, it happened that he fell into a sleep. He was very weary, and his sleep was profound. And as he lay in a profound sleep it happened that he fell into a dream.

He dreamt that he was in a great forest, a forest that had never been penetrated by the light of the sun. Giant writhing creepers stretched from tree to tree. The trees were ancient and their trunks massive. How lofty they were he could not tell, for the darkness was such and the density of their foliage such that

he could not see their tops. In his dream he saw himself lying, bound hand and foot, at the base of one of the largest trees in the forest. How long he had been there he did not know. It might have been centuries, it might have been thousands of years. As his eyes became more accustomed to the strange light he noticed that he was not alone. There, right in front of him, at the base of the next tree, gleamed two eyes, as red as live coals, in a form vague but horrible.

The eyes looked at him. They fascinated him. He could not take his eyes off them. They seemed to burn and bore their way into the deepest recesses and caverns of his soul. And they seemed to speak to him.

At first, for all his straining, the Man could not penetrate the meaning of the words. They came floating to him, vague

and unintelligible as words in a dream, which indeed they were. "Oh," he thought, "that I could understand!" But he could not understand. And his dream shivered and ended.

And again he dreamt. This time he lay in a reedy marsh by the brink of a great lake. The reeds were around and about him, but through their waving tops he could perceive patches of a twilight sky, cloudy, yet clean and star-sprinkled between the interstices of the clouds. The wind sighed and the reeds rustled, and instinctively he made a movement with his hands. To his surprise, though he knew not why he should be astonished at it, he found that his hands were free. He felt over his body, his poor, wasted body, and he knew that it was his own. But when he felt his feet they were firmly bound, and he could not release them.

And suddenly he knew that he was not alone. There, right in front of him, were two eyes. They were bright, but they did not burn ; they glowed, but with the radiance not of a furnace, but of a large and lustrous moon. And as he looked he knew that the eyes were speaking to him.

At first he could not hear the words aright. They were strange and foreign, like words in a dream, which, indeed, they were. But as, leaning forward with his ears straining and all his strength concentrated on the task, he listened and listened to the syllables which were repeated again and again like the syllables in some magic incantation, he heard, at first indistinctly, then more plainly, the words that the eyes were speaking.

“You are afraid,” they said.

And again his dream was shattered,

and again he dreamed. He lay in an open meadow under a sky of dawn. Not a cloud marred the placid surface of the heavens, and though the light of morning had half flooded the sky, a few large stars still gleamed in the ineffable vault. He felt happy, he knew not why; but when he felt his body he knew. His hands and his feet also were free; his strength had returned to him; his thews and sinews were robust and braced as in a youth that he had long forgotten; he sighed contentedly and stretched himself, his breast gently heaving with some mysterious sense as of freedom new-won and a world new-conquered. And as he lay and stretched himself he knew that he was not alone.

There, standing on the grass right in front of him, stood a Being in form and feature like a man but more glorious.

His long garment without seam fell in a gracious curve from his neck to his feet. His brow was calm and his lips curved in a faint and beatific smile. But his eyes were wonderful, and shone like the fading stars. And as the man looked at him it seemed as though the eyes spoke.

And he knew what they said at once, without doubt or hesitation. This was their message: "You are not afraid."

And the Man rose and stretched his arms towards the rim of the golden sun now appearing over the edge of the world. He cried aloud in the strength of his joy and his new-won freedom. And as he cried there blew a little wind; and as the wind blew there came from the far away a little voice, a still small voice no bigger than a man's hand.

And the voice whispered : " You have conquered."

And the Man fell down, and the Woman danced on his Chest.

VI

THE TURKEY CARPET

(OR "SEE HOW MANY AUTHORS I CAN
MENTION!")

"LIFE was built for them, not on the hope of a Hereafter, but on the proud self-consciousness of noble souls." Thus J. R. Green of the Anglo-Saxons. The gifted historian of the English people summarises in this one brief sentence the whole spiritual and mental outlook of a people. It is an outlook very distinct and clear-cut, but an outlook from which we of the twentieth century have moved far indeed. It is difficult perhaps to define the distinction with any degree of exactitude. One remembers the philosopher in "Rasselas." "Deviation from nature is deviation from happiness," said

he. "Let me only know what it is to live according to nature," observed the much-impressed Rasselas. "To live according to nature," replied the philosopher, "is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities arising from causes and effects: to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things." A kind of disquisition no more illuminating was that of Voltaire's professor of metaphysico-theologico-cosmologology. "It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end. Observe that the nose has been formed to bear spectacles—thus we have spectacles." We should be wary, therefore, of attempting

to draw hard and fast lines where no such lines may exist.

Nevertheless, it requires no very great penetration to discover that wherever the difference may lie there is certainly a difference, a difference so large, one may almost say, that it ceases to be a difference in degree and becomes one of kind, between a view of life such as that attributed to the Anglo-Saxons by Green (and even that of the Greeks as so acutely expounded by Mr Lowes Dickinson in his excellent little manual), and that of the average Englishman, or for that matter Frenchman, of our own day. "Nothing but the infinite pity," said the author of "John Inglesant," "is sufficient for the infinite pathos of human life." There perhaps we have the clue to the new factor which has intervened and worked a complete transformation in

man's ways of looking at himself and at the universe. The same note may be found struck again and again over the whole vast range of modern literature. We find it in Shorthouse, we find it in Maeterlinck, we find it in Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, we find it in Tennyson, we find it in a writer so far apart from them all as Emile Zola.

It is true that here and there there is a revulsion, a throwback to the earlier type. Through the cosmic sea of sympathy that has flooded, as it were, the surface of the globe, the primeval fires beneath fling up now and then some reeking volcano of iron-heartedness and cynicism. This same Zola had a strong vein of it. One remembers that terrible sneer in "Dr Pascal": "Suffering humanity cannot live without some lie or other to console it." Gissing too, a man

in many respects poles apart from the great French realist, has that singularly sardonic remark in "Henry Rycroft": "We needs must laugh a little in the presence of suffering." Yet in his case it is rather perhaps that it is the very excess of his pity that makes him pitiless; for the phrase has an appendix, "else how should we live our lives?" In Matthew Arnold it is frequently possible without an undue exercise of fancy to detect the cynicism that is born of softness, the cruelty that is the obverse of the medal of love. "Few understood his language; none understood his aims." Thus G. H. Lewes of Goethe; and how often, indeed, do the greatest amongst us speak to us in an alien tongue that we do not comprehend? There is often a barrier, impalpable, yet none the less real, between the genius and the mass of men among whom

he moves. "If," says Rousseau in his "Confessions," "I strive to speak to the people I meet, I certainly say some stupid thing to them; if I remain silent I am a misanthrope, an unsociable animal, a bear." Too true, alas! it is that the man who wishes to attract the gaze of the "general" cannot do it by speaking frankly and freely the truth that is in him. It has been the same from the dawn of the world. "It is a kind of policy in these days," writes old Burton of the "Anatomy," "to prefix a phantastical title to a book which is to be sold: for as larks come down to a day-net, many vain readers will tarry and stand gazing, like silly passengers, at an antick picture in a painter's shop, that will not look on a judicious piece." There are those in all times who possess a fatally potent gift for thus compelling the public gaze. As

Seneca so forcibly put it, there are some who by the strangeness of their conceits will make him loiter by the way that was going to fetch a midwife for his daughter now ready to lie in. Simplicity and directness of utterance have always been recognised as a supreme merit by the few who can judge of these things. "Grandis, et ut ita dicam, pudica oratio non est maculosa, nec turgida, sed naturali pulchritudine exsurgit." Thus Petronius; but he was too much man of the world to let his practice accord with his principles.

In truth, the old materialism, whether of the more erect and admirable type or of the wallowing and grovelling type, is dead. We call ourselves materialists now, just as we call ourselves by many other strange names, but materialism no longer walks the globe. "The Animus," said Sterne, "taking up her residence,

and sitting dabbling like a tadpole, all day long, both summer and winter, in a puddle, or in a liquid of any kind, how thick or thin soever, he would say, shocked his imagination." The phraseology may be paralleled from Swinburne's amusing but perhaps rather too irreverent parody of Tennyson: "The soul squats down in the body like a tinker drunk in a ditch." After all, though, we ought not perhaps to carp at the freedom of Mr Swinburne's jesting. Was it not Erasmus, himself the prince of jesters, yet a very serious man withal, who declared in his "Encomium Moriae" that "wits have always been allowed this privilege, that they might be smart upon any transactions of life, if so that their liberty did not extend unto railing." Though he himself qualifies his judgment somewhat by his implied rebuke to Juvenal for "raking in the sink of

vices to procure a laughter." Certainly, if we cannot go the whole way with those who would elevate jesting to the highest place at the feast of life, we can, nevertheless, appreciate the force of the gentle Elia's rebuke to Coleridge. "I think, Charles," remarked the poet (referring to the pulpit experiences of his earlier life), "that you never heard me preach." "My dear boy," replied Lamb, "I never heard you do anything else!" But genius is like the wind. It bloweth where it listeth. Carlyle was uttering nothing more than a much-needed warning when in "Sartor Resartus" he asked, "Would criticism erect not only finger-posts and turnpikes, but spiked gates and impassable barriers, for the mind of man?"

It may even be doubted whether at bottom all criticism is not entirely useless and purposeless. The critical spirit of

Walt Whitman criticised criticism itself. "Showing the best and dividing it from the worst," runs that memorable passage in the "Song of Myself," "age vexes age; knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they discuss I am silent, and go bathe, and admire myself." And even were all criticisms unquestionably just and impeccably acute, could they instruct any save the already instructed? "The power of instruction," observes Gibbon, "is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is already superfluous." Machiavelli was even more sweeping. "The world," says he in his placid way, "consists only of the vulgar."

VII

THE SAGE - IN - HUMBLE - CIR - CUMSTANCES

BIDDLE is a bootmaker. He is a very good bootmaker. I get my boots from him. He lives in the little lane (you do not know it) that turns off from the Seven Sisters Road on the left-hand side going towards Hanwell, just after you pass the Two Brewers Hotel. Last Monday I went up to see him. He was sitting on his doorstep as usual, with a shrewd old smile around his puckered lips and eyes and an upturned boot receiving medical treatment on his knees. He looked up as he heard me stop. "Mawnin'," he said independently. "Good - morning,

Mr Biddle," I replied; "are my boots ready yet?"

He scratched his brow with a black forefinger and cocked his leathery little head on one side. "Sowls an' uppers, sowls an' uppers," he murmured. "You can 'ev' 'em on Tuesday. Blarst," he added, as his tool slipped and made an ugly gash in the unfortunate boot from which I had distracted his attention. "Blarst," he repeated, as though to emphasise the fact that he knew the correct formula.

He seemed in talkative mood. I lit a cigarette and leant against the side of the doorway in such a manner that he had to look upward to see me. "I hope you won't think me rude, Mr Biddle," I observed, "but why do you say, 'blast'?"

His upper lip curled under its straggly grey moustache. He scrutinised me

narrowly, as though to make certain that I was not administering a gentle tug to his nether limb. "I sez 'blarst' becos I means 'blarst.'"

He was elusive. But I was determined. Not without a hard run should the old fox escape from me. He would have to double a bit. "And why," I interpolated insinuatingly, "do you mean 'blast'?"

"Why do I mean 'blarst'?" he grunted contemptuously. "Down't 'blarst' mean 'blarst'?" "'Ello, Snarkey," he ejaculated as an acquaintance passed; then turning to me he repeated his inquiry: "Wot I wants to naow is this: Down't 'blarst' mean 'blarst'?"

"Oh, quite so, Mr Biddle," said I; "but the point is, what is it that you want to blast at the moment. And do you employ the term, if I may phrase it thus, on the plane of wind or on that of dynamite?"

He carefully put the boot down among the cabbage stalks on the bottom step. He spat on his hands and rubbed them together. Then with the deliberation of an ancient raven he regarded me. "'Oo yer coddin'?" he asked.

"No one," I retorted, "but the question really is not whom I am coddling but whom you are blasting. And when we have discovered who is the object of your tender attentions we have still to ascertain what exactly is the quality of those attentions. Come, Mr Biddle," I continued, "I really thought better of your powers of self-elucidation than this!"

"'Ere, 'arf a mow, Mr Esquiff," he sniffed sarcastically. "Fink I'm a blarsted dictionary?" And again he sniffed with a double dose of sarcasm.

"No," I answered as sweetly as I could. "If you were a dictionary you could

probably tell me the meaning of the word 'blast.' ”

“Nah, look 'ere, 'oo yer gettin' et? Didn't I tell yer thet wen I sez 'blarst' I means 'blarst' ? ”

His face, always rather rubicund, was getting perceptibly redder. Altercations he did not mind. He was used to them. But cross-examinations, like most Englishmen, he heartily disliked, so pretended to despise. “Dem an' blarst ! ” he muttered with some emphasis between his teeth.

“Come, come,” I said, flicking the end of my cigarette, “isn't this rather piling an unexplained Ossa upon a seemingly unexplicable Pelion ? ” I gave him time to digest the remark and then went on : “Surely to drag in a second unknown before we have disposed of the first is to ignore the most elementary rules which should govern the conduct of dialectic. I

cannot, Mr Biddle, allow the intrusion of this 'damn' until you have to my satisfaction disposed of that 'blast.'"

"Gow on, gow on," he cried in bitterly encouraging tones; "gow on, if yer likes it. It down't 'urt me, an' if yer likes it yer can gow on."

He had by no means followed me. "If you mean by asking that I should go on, that I should proceed, as the poet puts it, to fresh woods and pastures new, you are very far from having divined my intentions. I do not mean to go on. On the contrary, I propose to stay precisely where I was. And that was at 'blast.'"

Something of an ugly glint came into his eye. "Thinks yerself blarsted clever," he rasped, half under his breath. "Well, if yer likes it you can go on."

I thought it best to soothe his ruffled feelings for a moment. "That's all right,

Mr Biddle," I remarked, "you know I don't mean any harm, don't you?"

He was a little mollified. "Aow yis," said he, tossing his head so sharply as to shake a dozen or so of little brass nails out of his mouth, "I naows as 'ow you down't mean 'arm. There's them as does an' there's them as doesn't, an' I down't naow w'ich is the wust. You're too blarsted shawp though; if you were any shawper you'd cut yourself."

(And so on and so on and so on. What we want to do is really to get down to the heart of the people, and Mr Winterbotham in his perfect little thumb-nail sketches unquestionably does this.)

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A VADE-MECUM FOR ASPIRANTS

I

THE MODEL LEADING ARTICLE

THE Report of the Royal Commission on Gramophones which, as will be seen in another column, was issued last night, is bulky and complicated even when compared with previous documents of this character. It is scarcely necessary for us, we presume, to recall to the minds of our readers the circumstances which led to the Commission's appointment. To most of us they are only too painfully familiar. Suffice it to say that the ever-growing volume of public indignation on the subject of reference had by 1902 reached

such a pitch that the Government of the day was compelled to yield to the pressure of opinion and appoint a Commission with the object of discovering what exactly was the present position of the law as bearing upon gramophones, and what changes, if any, were desirable. The Commissioners, who met for the first time on 9th March 1904, were a very strong and representative body of men, amongst them being Lord Fitzgibbet, Lord Crimp, Viscount Bourton-on-the-Water (one of the greatest Speakers the House of Commons ever had), Mr Andrew Hogmanay of the Mechanical Music Noise Abatement Society, Sir Heinrich Spitzbergen, M.P., Sir Giuseppe Piccolomini, M.P., Mr Ivan Levinski, M.P., Lord Julias Van Ostade, Mrs Toop, Mr Isaac L. Cholmondeley, the famous *entrepreneur*, Madame Colorotura, and Mr Adolphus Jugg, of the Home Office,

who acted as secretary. The first six years out of the nine over which their sittings extended were devoted to the collection of a vast body of evidence from hundreds of witnesses of every shade of opinion ; and the last two years have been spent on the preparation of the Report. Nothing could well have been more thorough than this investigation. What is the outcome of it all? What is it that the Commission suggests should be done to diminish what is admittedly one of the most irritating of the many nuisances that harass the respectable citizen in modern England?

The suggestions of the Commissioners—who are unanimous save as respects certain minor points in connection with which Mrs Toop has expressed her dissent from her colleagues—may be divided into two parts: the general or positive proposals, and the particular or negative pro-

posals. With regard to the former it will be as well to say here and now that most people will find it impossible to give them their unqualified approval. Doubtless there are some sections in this half of the Report in which the reasoning of the Commissioners is irrefragable and their conclusions unchallengeable. But at the most we can only say that this portion of the Report is, like the curate's egg, good in parts. It was inevitable that any Royal Commission which should take it upon itself to cross the Rubicon which divides the idealistic (and as we think, sound) conception of social dynamics from the purely material conception would provoke at once general and bitter indignation. It is painful to have to say this ; but it is no use blinking facts, and we think that the vast majority of the people of this country will refuse to blink them with no uncertain voice. The

development of events, the process of cosmic change, has brought us to a stage where it is inevitable that we should make a choice. Nations cannot remain for ever like the proverbial donkey between the two equidistant bundles of hay ; they cannot serve two masters ; either they must love the one and hate the other or they must forsake the one and seek after the other. Much of the Labour unrest which has been of late so disquieting a feature to all students of social essences is directly, or at any rate indirectly, traceable to the prevailing confusion in the public mind in regard to this all-important matter. Our politicians, let us frankly admit, have given us a poor guidance in this respect. They have been in this connection but blind leaders of the blind. But it is high time that somebody should speak out.

Such are the recommendations of the

Royal Commission. It is with genuine regret that we find ourselves unable to accord them our unqualified approval. That, for reasons which we have already adequately explained, is impossible. We need scarcely explain that we do not mean to convey that we put the whole of their recommendations instantly and completely out of court. On the contrary, we have little doubt but that Governments of the future will find the Report a rich storehouse from which to draw suggestions for legislation which, without making too sudden a break in the slow and orderly evolution of English institutions, will by an adjustment here and a modification there cause the whole machine to work more smoothly. That, however, is a matter with which the future will have to deal. It remains for us only to again express our sense of deep gratitude to the public-spirited

men and women who by devoting so long a period to the study of one of the most grave and pressing problems that confront us to-day have set an example which every citizen would do well to follow.

II

THE MODEL MUSICAL CRITICISM

LAST night at the Cacophonic Hall, Herr Zoppy Zqzqzqzqwich gave his last recital of the present season to an audience which filled all parts of the building. Herr Zqzqzqzqwich is not one of those, alas, too-plentiful virtuosi whose chief mission in life it is apparently to tickle the ears of the groundlings with displays of meretricious brilliancy of technique. He is an artist to the finger-tips, and, what is perhaps rarer still, a scholar. It was, therefore, in anticipation of a rich musical treat that the whole of music-loving London wended its way last night to the famous hall in Clamour Street, and it was by no means

disappointed. The principal item in the great violinist's programme was Pot-bouille's delightful but exacting Concerto, the only example in that form that the famous Gallic leader of the Turbinistic school has yet produced, although rumour has it that he will shortly present us with another. The introductory Allegretto was played with incomparable spirit, the deftness of the player's brushwork when he came to the last rapid bars of the recurrent second theme taking the audience by storm. The same qualities were displayed in the Scherzo and the Finale; but it was naturally in the Andante that Herr Zqzqzqzqwich was at his greatest. Both his *ton* and his *couleur* were superb; never has that marvellously poignant fragment, which in its sorrowful yet serene wisdom seems to plumb the very depths of the human soul, been played with more

convincing sanity and passion. The run of glissandic thirteenth towards the end of the movement—a thing that might well have taxed the resources of a Paganini—was negotiated with consummate ease and purity, and the sudden magic check in the triplicated barberinis at the close literally sent an almost terrible shudder over the whole of the vast audience. Needless to say, the player received a great ovation at the close.

Of Herr Zqzqzqzqwich's other numbers the most important were the familiar but ever-fresh Concerto of Beethoven and a Rhapsodie Chinoise by Mück, which had not previously been heard in this country. It is a work which it is not easy to grasp at first hearing, but there are some memorable passages in the daring young German's familiar idiom. The remaining items were Tartini's "Trille du Diable,"

Bach's rather saccharine "Air," and a pretty but scarcely profound "Danse des Ivrognes" by Gustave Coquetaille. The orchestral parts were sustained by the Bayswater Symphony Orchestra under Mr Minton Lamb, which also gave a stirring rendition of that gifted young English composer, Mr Bunyan Browne's "Third 'Soho' Suite."

III

THE MODEL COLUMN OF PERSONAL CHAT

ONE of the prettiest weddings of the year will be that of Lord Arthur Grandison and Miss Arabella Van Eyck Caffer, which will be celebrated at Holy Trinity, Pont Street, in the second week of next month. Holy Trinity is rapidly becoming one of the most popular churches for fashionable weddings, and there are good judges who believe that it has a future in store for it which will eclipse even the glories of St George's, Hanover Square, in its prime. Lord Arthur, who was born in 1813, is a younger brother of the late Marquess of Stoke, of whom it used to be said that he had a family on which the

sun never set, he and the Marchioness (who was a daughter of the celebrated "Billy" Dawson, of Skibbereen) having had no less than twenty-two children, most of whom, for one reason or another, went abroad to live. Lord Arthur was educated at Eton and Sandhurst, and, entering the Army, attained the rank of Major in the Royal Horse Guards (Blues); since his retirement he has spent his time mostly between London and Glen-vommit, his beautiful and picturesque place in Clackmannanshire. He is quite one of the most popular of the younger men about town.

The bride-to-be, who first met her prospective husband at a house party of the Countess of Bibby's in April last, was born just fifteen years ago in Newport, Long

Island, where her late father, "Bunco" Caffer, of New York, built himself one of the finest marble palaces in the Eastern States. A pretty blonde, with fascinating blue eyes and a wealth of beautiful fair hair, Miss Caffer married as her first husband Mr Bellville P. Boyler, of Philadelphia, since when she has resumed her maiden name. Three bishops are to help tie the nuptial knot; there are to be eighteen bridesmaids and two pages, amongst the former being the Ladies Faith, Charity, and Hope Grandison (nieces of the bridegroom), Lady Ursula Stookenhams, the Hon. Peggy Rheinault (only daughter of Lord Capelcourt), Miss Lois Urquhart (youngest daughter of Urquhart of Ercildoune and Mrs Urquhart), and three pretty cousins of the bride—the Misses Poppy Spoof, Maisie Van Eyck, and Clytemnestra Honk. The pages

will be the Master of Mactavish and little Master Bartholomew Jobbe, son of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Labour Board.

The bride will be given away by her father, and Lord Arthur's best man will be the Earl of Torquay, who fought at his side when he went through the Pondoland campaign as personal A.D.C. to Prince Augustus of Harz-Goldenberg. Presents are pouring in on the happy couple from the friends of both families, amongst those who have sent valuable and costly gifts being H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Servia, Princess Franz Karl of Hoppe-Blichtenstein, and Count Polonyi, the eminent Hungarian statesman, whose brother not long ago married Miss Caffer's sister. The wedding dress is being made by Aglavaine, of 1864 Bond Street. It

is of white Thibetan silk with a train of Coromandel suède trimmed with seed-pearls and a veil of Coan ninon. The bride's bouquet will be of arum lilies, which are becoming very popular for weddings just now, and the bridesmaids will carry tall sprays of pink excrucabilia supplied by Tibson's. The honeymoon will be spent at Boby Castle, Skye, which has been lent to the happy pair by the bridegroom's brother-in-law, the Duke of Fulham.

The monthly meet of the Rickshaw Club will be held (weather permitting) on Wednesday, the 23rd. Southwark Park is, as usual, the venue, and it is hoped that there will be a large turn-out, especially as the meet is the last of the present season. Amongst those who are sure to be there are Sir Guy Vaux, Lord

Macgillicuddy, Viscount de Rosenheim, Mrs Abinger-Hammer, Rear-Admiral Sir Capulet Johnstone, and Mr "Pat" O'Connell, without whom nowadays no gathering of the kind is complete.

Several people have lately been seen dining at the Hotel Cordiale. Amongst those to be noticed there in the present week have been Lord Hindstairs, Mr Ike Poppenheim, Sir Anthony Rowley, and the Marquess of Boxehill, whose little parties at the Cordiale are quite an institution.

Congratulations to Lord Bucklershard, who attained his majority last Thursday. Lord Bucklershard comes of a fighting stock. His maternal grandfather was the celebrated Sir Pyke Peyton, whose gallant

defence of Monte Video in the earlier years of the last century earned him the commendation of the Iron Duke. His father died in one of our "little wars" on the North-West Frontier, and eight of his uncles have attained the rank of general or admiral. The young peer is expected to take a prominent part in the organisation of the Territorials in his own county. He is well blessed with this world's goods and has five historic country seats as well as a magnificent town house in Bellasis Square.

No less than three big dances are fixed for the 24th and many people are almost in despair about it, especially in view of the difficulty of getting young men nowadays. The dances include Lady Straphanger's, Lady Alicia Chope's, and

the great ball at Ditcham House, which will have almost a semi-official character and which it is expected that royalty will honour with its presence.

It is officially announced that no more tickets can be issued for the Royal Parade at the Brentford Cattle Show. Since it became known that the King and Queen would both be present at this most delightful of annual functions, the Lord Chamberlain's department has been literally inundated with applications for tickets. Even as it is, the task of allocating them will be no easy matter. Whatever may be said of other State officials, nobody can deny that the Lord Chamberlain's staff certainly earn their salaries.

IV

THE MODEL PUZZLE CORNER

RIDDLES

WHAT is the difference between a school-master and an engine-driver?

When is a door not a door?

What famous general never had an eye, never had a tooth, never had a leg, never had a mouth, and never had an arm, and never lost a battle?

What kind of poultry live upon Tanagra statuettes?

Why should a musician consider himself the inferior of a butcher?

What distinguished scriptural character frequently complained of neuralgia?

Where was Moses when the light went out?

ACROSTIC

My first is in fork but not in spoon,
My second's in sun but not in moon,
My third is in planet but not in star,
My fourth is in raffle but not in bazaar,
My fifth is in donkey but not in ape,
My sixth is in form but not in shape,
My seventh's in bush but not in tree,
My whole is something you never will be.

BURIED RIVERS

The hippopotamus is a noble beast
and is much misunderstood.

I saw your Aunt Mary with a mess-
jacket on.

Please immerse your hands in this
refreshing water.

No spectacle could be more depressing
than a limp opossum.

He began gesticulating immediately he perceived me.

You had better take precisely the third turn to the right.

Oh no, said the sparrow, that will never do.

I am getting rather tired of the salmon that Uncle James will insist on sending.

SQUARE WORD

1. A river in Ecuador.
2. A certain thing you very often walk over.
3. A Jewish composer.
4. A leading daily paper.
5. A vegetable substance much used in cotton mills.
6. One of the wives of Henry the Eighth.
7. A celebrated poet recently dead.
8. A tax.

The answers to last week's puzzles have been unavoidably held over owing to the enormous mass of attempts at solution sent in. The editor hopes to be able to publish them next week with the full list of awards in connection with our great competition. In response to inquiries from "Stork" (Birchington-on-Sea) and other readers, the editor must once more make it clear that his decision is final.

V

THE MODEL POLITICAL NOTES

I UNDERSTAND that a whole series of changes in the Cabinet are imminent. At least three ministers will in all probability give up their portfolios, and there will be an almost general reshuffle of the other posts. The official announcement may be expected at any moment. But the Government may think it more politic to postpone the changes until the beginning or even the end of next Session. It is certain that before long one of the law officers of the Crown will be promoted to a high judicial position, which of course will necessitate his retirement from the Parliamentary arena.

There is widespread dissatisfaction amongst Ministerialists with regard to the course taken by the Government with regard to the Dogs Diseases (Ireland) Bill. The measure passed through all its stages in the Commons quite early in the Session, but the lords after giving it a second reading have hung it up, as it appears, indefinitely. The Radical "forwards" are making it uncomfortably clear that in their opinion the Government should send their lordships a clear intimation that the situation is such as to, unless something is done with the Bill immediately, eventuate in literally swamp-
ing the Upper House with new creations.

A Bill establishing a maximum working day for lighthouse keepers was introduced on Tuesday by Major Black, Unionist

member for Mid-Rutland. The Bill, which has the support of members of all parties, will, if passed, come into operation on the first of January next year. Its backers include Lord Lundy, Lord William Rockingham, Colonel Mohun, Sir Zebedee Haythornethwaite, Sir Thomas Higgins, Mr Arthur Pouch, Mr Sam Winkle, Mr J. Dummit, and Mr Michael O'Rafferty.

It is expected that Mr Norman Mavromichaelis, the victor of Bootham-on-Tees, will take the oath and his seat to-morrow. The Unionists will give him a great reception.

Captain Beverley-Lunn has obtained a return which throws a glaring light

upon the proceedings of the last few years. It appears that since the present Government came into office the total number of new officials created has amounted to the colossal total of 5,837,927, with salaries amounting in the aggregate to £29,576,847,365 per annum. Nothing could show more clearly the insidious way in which the Government is attempting to saddle the country with an army of bureaucrats of whom it will be almost impossible to get rid once they have been called into existence. Captain Beverley-Lunn has put down a motion on the subject for an early date: "That this House expresses its strong disapproval of the legislative and administrative action of the present Government whereby the country is being saddled with a new and dangerous bureaucracy which is dangerous to the national welfare, ruinous to the

taxpayer, and entirely out of consonance with all the best traditions of the national life.

Yesterday a meeting was held in Committee Room No. 99 of members interested in Paraguay. About twenty members of all parties were present, and it was decided that a deputation should wait upon the Prime Minister upon the subject. The matter may also be raised on the Foreign Office vote the week after next.

It is announced that the veteran Mr Benjamin Martin, who has for so many years proved himself such an excellent chairman of committees, will not seek re-election at the next General Election. Had Mr Martin come into the House six years earlier than he did he would have succeeded the late Sir Robert Miggley as father of the House. It is felt that the occasion of Mr Martin's retirement

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ought not to be allowed to pass by without some suitable commemoration, and a small committee has been formed, with Mr Herbert Rogers as secretary, to organise a subscription for a presentation.

VI

THE MODEL ART CRITICISM

At the Haliburton Galleries, Wendover Street, Messrs Didler have just opened an important show of oil paintings by modern Montenegrin masters. Not since 1902, the year of the memorable exhibition at the Guildhall, have we had an opportunity of seeing in London so representative a collection of works, both of the Cettinje and of the Dulcigno schools. Practically every man of note is represented by his most representative works, and the hundred odd pictures as a body will certainly convince the sceptic—if there have been any such—of the genuineness and magnitude of the Trans-Adriatic Renaissance.

Naturally one turns first to the work of M. Vllipo Scouacho, happily still alive though no longer active, the man who above all others must be regarded as the leader and in some respects the creator of the Neo-Montenegrin movement. No less than eighteen pictures from his brush hang here—with one or two exceptions all painted in his prime. Undoubtedly the clou is “Pol Opsik, Antivari” (No. 13). Storm lours over the little port, a forlorn handful of white houses huddled between the vastness of the sea and the vastness of the mountains. Trees and waters, rocks and walls, shudder with prescience of the coming tempest; never has such an inconceivable lavishness of idea been so united with an incredible economy of means. A landscape almost equally great is “On the Skutari Road” (No. 87). The soft rays of the sunken sun gild the top

of a solitary hill where foot of man has never trodden. The picture in its combined ruggedness and tenderness seems to typify the strangely blended Montenegrin character, but one doubts the advisability of the dab of Chinese white in the middle foreground. It is a picture, to return to again and again. There is an indefinable charm in all the sea pictures, in none more than in "L'Aube Consolatrice" (No. 49). Long even ripples sparkling in the full blaze of the noonday sun evenly flowing into a little beach where a grey corse lies motionless amid the wet weeds. In essence it is religious—though not in the slightest degree didactic, for didacticism in art is the abomination of desolation—in its revelation of the littleness of man and the immensity of the eternal verities. Of the other examples, "In a Sock-Suspender Factory, Monastir,"

is perhaps the most striking, both from the point of view of the historian of artistic development, and from that of the purely æsthetic connoisseur. The blaze of yellows and pinks and greens, the treatment of light and shade almost staggers and blinds one in its audacity ; but yet how true it all is, how free from the slightest taint of triviality and commonplace ! Scouacho's niche in the temple of the immortals is assured.

Scouacho's chief lieutenant, Porko Biska, died perhaps before he had reached the full maturity of his powers, but the memorable qualities in his rich, splendid, almost obstreperous art are unmistakable. Such paintings as that of a wood in autumn (76), and that of the opening of the Montenegrin Parliament (54) roar with the wild yet intellectual orchestration of a Strauss ; the force of paint could no

farther go. A kindred spirit is abundantly evident in the work of his confrère and brother-in-law, Stunto Jokoso, who, as somebody once humorously said, sees red everywhere. More classical is the spirit of Fonio Lubar, a master of flowing and graceful line and colour. A man of whom little has previously been heard in this country is Tono Likkowich, whose symphonic landscapes, notably Nos. 22 and 49, wear a smile as mysterious and as reticent as that of Monna Lisa herself. Distinctly worthy of attention, too, is the work of Joski Protose, who is strongly under the influence of modern German realism, but brings to his work much that is distinctly his own. Of his genre pictures, "A Dead Louse" (37), for sheer ruthlessness and virility of treatment could scarcely be excelled.

In another room Messrs Didler are

exhibiting a number of water-colours of the Swedish Tyrol by Mr J. Macdonald Barron. They are well worth a visit.

VII

THE MODEL COLUMN FOR HOUSEWIVES

TWO USEFUL RECIPES

No. 1.—TAKE a saucepan and fill with water to the depth of two or three inches. Put it on stove and allow it to remain there until water is well on the boil. Take an egg (or two if one be deemed insufficient) and without breaking the shell place it in saucepan so that it is just covered by water. Continue to keep water on boil for three and a half or, if a somewhat denser consistency of substance be desired, four minutes. Time may be gauged with watch, clock, or sand-glass specially prepared for purpose (Messrs Spatchcock & Wilson, of High

Holborn, make excellent articles of the sort), but comparative exactitude should, if possible, be secured. At end of specified time saucepan should be briskly removed, large spoon (or fork if no spoon handy) inserted into water and egg extracted. The egg immediately after emergence from water will be seen to be wet. This, however, need cause no alarm, as water will speedily evaporate, leaving nice, clean, smooth, dry surface. Place egg in small cup of suitable shape; serve hot and consume with salt and pepper to taste.

No. 2.—A Cheap, Easy Dish for a Large Family. Take two pounds of best Astrakhan caviare and fourteen ounces of superfine *paté-de-foie-gras*, and mix until a uniform paste has been secured. Take also the gizzards of eight ptarmigan and two pounds of fresh lemon pips and

grind as small as possible. Boil the first mixture in butter for about twenty minutes and then add the second, stirring softly over a slow fire. When the desired softness has been obtained, drain off the water and stand aside for the steam to come off. Transfer to double saucepan and add the yolks of twelve eggs and a quarter to half a pound of guava jelly; stir and boil slowly for an hour and a half. Add half-a-pint of water; allow the mixture to stand for two hours and then strain through a clean cloth. The solid remaining in the cloth may be thrown away; the liquid that comes through will, if allowed to stand for two hours, form a jelly. Place the jelly on a dish and serve with a garniture of bread-crumbs. If the utmost possible economy is necessary the breadcrumbs may be omitted.

HOW TO OPEN A DOOR

A number of young housewives have lately informed me that they have considerable difficulty in opening doors. I cannot quite understand this, as the process is really quite a simple one. Take the handle of the door in the right hand (or the left, as the case may be) and turn slowly and without the application of unnecessary force, so that the upper portion of the handle moves from right to left (or from left to right, as the case may be), and the lower portion from left to right (or, as the case may be, from right to left). If this is done properly (unless the door is out of order, in which case the services of a locksmith should be requisitioned) the catch will be found to slip. A slight push (in some cases a pull is required, as some doors

open out of a room in a different way from that in which they open into a room) must then be given and the door will then be found to yield in the manner aimed at. It may be taken as a general rule—though, like most rules, it will admit of exceptions—that a door should be shut after the opener has passed through it. Open doors frequently admit draughts, and experienced doctors will tell you that there is nothing like a draught for assisting the contraction of a cold. I have seen doors, however, which open in a different way from those above described. Each kind, of course, as is always the case in life, must be treated according to its particular nature, but the instructions I have given above will be found to be of fairly general application.

WHAT SORT OF SHOES SHOULD BABY WEAR?

Mothers frequently have much worry and searching of hearts with respect to their babies' footwear. Babies are tender creatures and cannot in every way be treated just as we would treat grown-up persons, whose bodies and brains are alike more fully developed. To take an extreme example, nobody, for instance, would dream of putting a baby into Wellington boots. Their little feet are neither so large nor so hardened as those of their elders; and the same thing indeed may be said of their hands. Madame Pupa, of Z6 Palmyra Buildings, Chancery Lane, has some admirable assortments of babies' shoes, comfortable and hygienic in every way, which she is always glad to sell to readers who mention *The Daily Wheezer*.

VIII

THE MODEL CUPID'S CORNER

(THE Editress is always glad to give advice to those of her fair readers who have love or complexion troubles.)

MARTHA (Greenwich).—No, I do not think it would be feasible or, if feasible, profitable for you to bring three Breach of Promise actions at the same time against three different men, even under the circumstances you mention. Juries are always apt to look at these matters from the male point of view; and, after all, you have been a little fickle in your affections, haven't you?

ROSIE B. (Newcastle-on-Tyne).—Yes, your position does seem to be a rather cruel one. You say that you are quite

certain he loves you ; and yet somehow I feel that if he really loves you as much as he says he does, he ought to be willing to give up the garlic. Try what a little quiet persuasion will do, dear ; endeavour to make him see matters more from your point of view. God has given us women a great gift in the power of our tongues. If you find him still obdurate, let me hear from you again.

LILY OF THE VALLEY (Seven Dials).—Your complaint sounds like eczema. It is very hard to get rid of it. The best cream for it that I know is prepared by Madame Scheherazade, of Bond Street, whose advertisement will be found in another column.

COON (Portarlington).—You are a very foolish girl, Coon, and I am very much ashamed of you. I should have thought that at this time of day everybody would

have known that tight-lacing is one of the very worst things from the point of view of physical well-being. The girl who, as you say you have done, brings her waist down to seven inches, is committing a crime against society. But there, I suppose I am very old-fashioned.

DISTRACTED TEACHER (Exeter).—Yes, he has behaved very, very badly indeed, and I must say that in your position I should find it very, very hard to forgive a man who had behaved in such a manner. I do not think you did wisely in refraining from reproaching him when you found out that he was meeting your friend and you on alternate Saturday afternoons and taking her to stalls at the theatre when he only took you to a beggarly cinematograph show. In my opinion you should have gone straight to his mother and told her outright what you thought of

her son. Depend on it, my dear, a man who will "carry on" like this is not worth thinking about. I am sure he would never make a good husband.

POPPY (Stornoway).—I think you have acted hastily, Poppy. To attempt to attach a man by leading-strings is the worst mistake a woman can make. You say that he cut you in the street when he was walking out with another young lady. Well, what if he did? He may have had very good reason; and in any case you ought to have afforded him an opportunity of giving an explanation before sending him a letter of the sort that you enclose. If only young people would be more tolerant of each other's little ways, the world would be a much happier place than it is. I think, Poppy, that you will learn that when you are a year or two older.

MABEL (Bettws-y Coed).—No; most empathetically no!

JUNIPER (London).—Asafoetida is an excellent thing for it and also very pleasant to take.

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